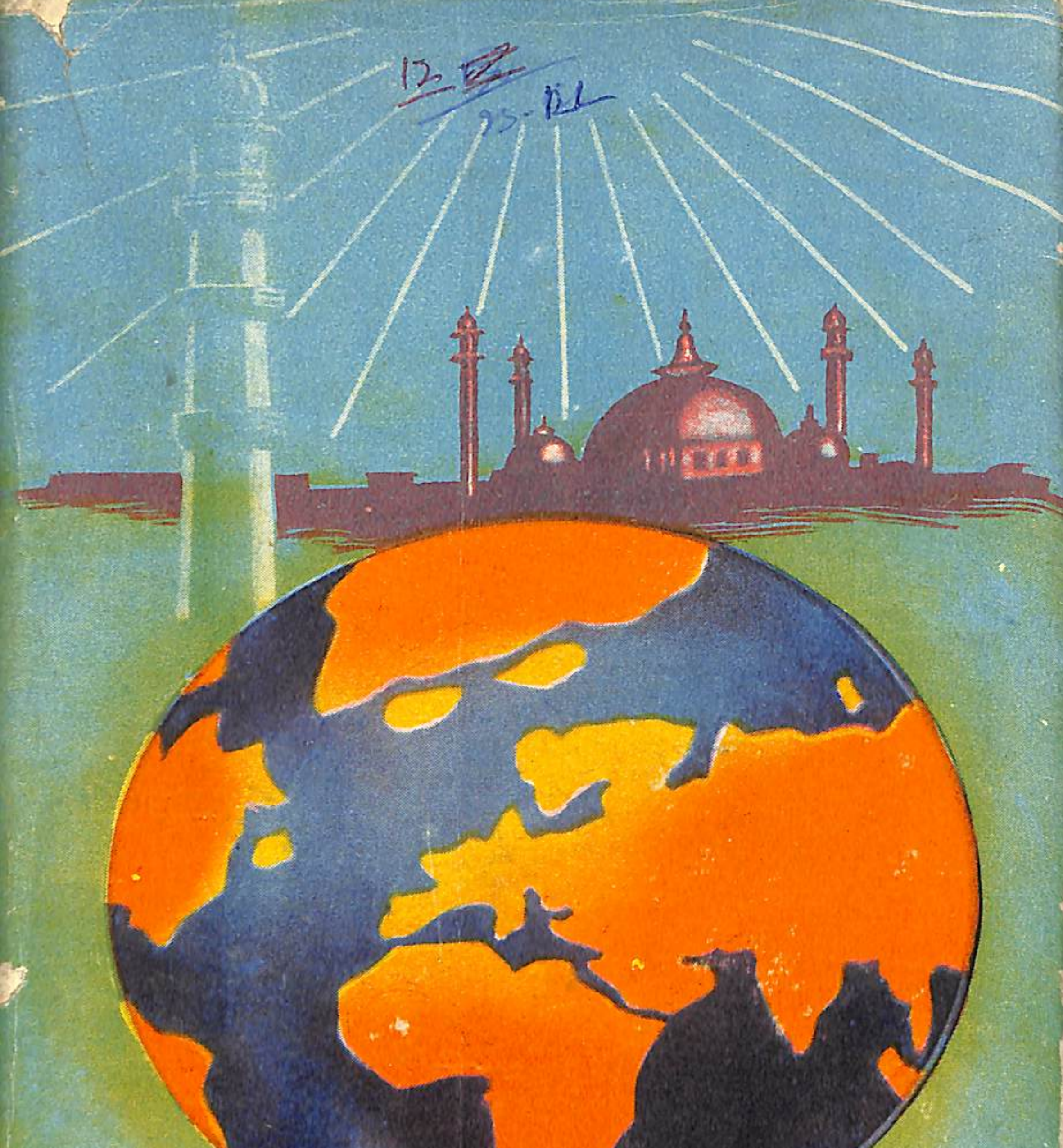


THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE TEACHINGS OF
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HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD

The Philosophy Of

THE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM

By

HAZRAT

MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD

Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

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HAZRAT
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad
Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

A Note About The Author

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born in 1835, in Qadian, India, in a family of Mughal Chiefs. From his very childhood *Hazrat* Ahmad was devoted to the study of the Holy Quran and spent the greater part of his time in prayer and contemplation.

He was profoundly impressed by the fact that in his time Islam was the target of attack from all directions and in all spheres, and that the fortunes of the Muslims were at a very low ebb. Indeed, faith in religious doctrines and teachings was generally yielding place to doubts and skepticism all over the world, and in the case of most people religious sentiment was only skin-deep.

The *Hazrat* was deeply distressed by this state of affairs. His passionate devotion to Islam and deep admiration of the teachings contained in the Holy Quran prompted him to undertake a vindication and exposition of Islamic doctrines and teachings. This took shape in his epoch-making publication called, *Brahin-i-Ahmadiyya*, which was issued in four volumes. In this publication his thesis was that Islam was a living faith, by following which man could establish contact and enter into communion with his Maker, and that the teachings contained in the Holy Quran and laws promulgated by Islam were designed to help mankind to attain moral, intellectual and spiritual perfection. This book was received with great acclaim by eminent Muslims throughout India and the *Hazrat* was at once recognized as the most profound living thinker and scholar in Islam.

Hazrat Ahmad claimed to be the recipient of Divine revelation and announced that God had appointed him as the Messiah mentioned in the prophecies contained in the Bible and the Holy Quran. In 1889 he organized his followers under the name of Ahmadiyya Movement. Since then this Movement has faced a succession of storms of persecution, opposition and condemnation.

The *Hazrat* was the author of nearly eighty books, mostly in Urdu, but some in Arabic and Persian, in which he expounded the teachings of Islam. Slowly there gathered around him a band of devoted followers from all sections of Muslim society and even from non-Muslims, attracted by the magnetic charm of his personality, his pure saintly life and the force of his arguments. Before his death in May 1908, his mission had begun to be known and had attracted adherents even outside India.

Hazrat Ahmad was succeeded by *Hazrat* Maulawi Nuruddin who was elected as Khalifa by the members of the Ahmadiyya Movement. *Hazrat* Maulawi Nuruddin passed away in 1914 and since then the Movement has been led by the second Khalifa, *Hazrat* Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, also the eldest son of *Hazrat* Ahmad. The Ahmadiyya Movement has made an amazing progress under his leadership in spite of strong opposition and persecution.

The members of the Ahmadiyya Movement are now found nearly all over the world and missions have been established in many countries of the East and West under the direction of the present Khalifa.

PREFACE

In December 1896, the Great Religions Conference was held in Lahore, India, (now Pakistan). The conveners of this historic Conference invited representatives of all important religions to address the Conference and to expound the teachings of their respective faiths on five vital subjects selected by the organizers. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, was also invited to present the Islamic teachings on these topics.

This paper was written in Urdu by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in response to this invitation. The reading of the paper could not be completed within the time allotted, but such was the profound impression created by the portion read out that at the insistence of the audience the sittings of the Conference were carried over to the next day to enable the reading to be completed. The press described Hazrat Ahmad's address as "pure gospel", and "the best and most attractive presentation of the faith of Islam" from the pen of " no ordinary person who thus addressed himself to the West".

The five subjects selected by the Conference for discussion were :

(1) The physical, moral and spiritual states of man.

(2) The state of man in the after-life.

(3) The object of man's life and the means of its attainment.

(4) The operation of practical ordinances of law in this life and the life to come.

(5) The sources of Divine knowledge.

In order to make this address an authoritative exposition of the faith of Islam, Hazrat Ahmad imposed upon himself an important and significant limitation. He observed that often an advocate of a

religion tends to attribute to the teachings of his religion what may not be deducible from the scriptures of that faith. He, therefore, announced that his paper would be based entirely upon the Holy Quran and would draw upon no other source.

An interesting event relating to this address was a manifesto published in advance by the author in which he stated that God had told him that his paper would surpass all other papers to be read at the Conference. An English rendering of this manifesto is reproduced in the Appendix.

We consider it a privilege to present an American edition of the English translation of this discourse. We hope that it will prove of benefit to all those who may be interested in seeking an accurate and authoritative understanding of the faith of Islam.

The Publishers.

Introductory Words :

Every Claim and Argument Based on The Holy Quran

In this auspicious meeting, which has been convened with the object that the advocates of different religious systems should, so far as the limits of the questions set allow, set forth the beauties of their respective religions, I, as an advocate of the faith of Islam, shall dwell upon its beauties Before I advert to the subject of this address, I beg leave to state that all my assertions and arguments shall be based upon and drawn from the Holy Quran. I deem it a matter of the first importance that every person, who believes in any sacred scriptures as the revealed Word of God, should so set limits to his advocacy of the religion he supports as not to go outside of the holy book or rely upon arguments other than those which the book furnishes. For, if he does not observe this rule, he, in fact, makes and advances a new book and not the one which he professes to support. Therefore, as it is my object to show the beauties of the Quran and to establish its exclusive excellence over all other books, I shall observe the rule above stated and depend solely upon the Quran for every assertion and argument, stating only that which is set forth in it in plain words, or what may be reasonably inferred from them.

As the other speakers are also expected to observe this reasonable rule, there will be a good opportunity for judicious minds to form a judgment as to the comparative merits of the various books on behalf of which it is claimed that they are revealed. For the same reason, I shall avoid all reference to the authorities containing the reported words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) and not go outside the Word of God as revealed in the Quran. In short, this is the day of the manifestation of the glory and the excellence of the Quran, and I humbly beseech Almighty God to assist me in this undertaking. Amen!

Holly Gift

The cost of publication of this book has been borne by our brothers-in-faith, Mr. Mahmood Ahmad, Mr. Anwar Ahmad and Mr. Munawar Ahmad of Calcutta on behalf of their deceased father Seth Mohammad Siddiq Sahib and mother Fatima Begum Sahiba (May Allah grant her long life) for their spiritual benefit.

May Allah bless them all with his mercy and may this book prove a source of guidance for thirsty souls of humanity, Amen.

MIRZA WASIM AHMAD
Nazir Dawat-o-Tabligh,
Sadar Anjuman Ahmadiyya,
Qadian (Punjab) India.

Question One :

The Physical, Moral and Spiritual States of Man

The first question relates to the physical, moral and spiritual states of man. The Holy Quran observes this division by fixing three respective sources for this threefold state of man. In other words, it mentions three springs out of which these three states flow.

The First State :

The first of these in which the physical state of man takes its birth is termed the *Nafs-ammāra*, which signifies the uncontrollable spirit, or the spirit prone to evil. Thus it says :

إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ

> It is the characteristic of the *Nafs-ammāra* that it inclines man towards evil, tends to lead him into iniquitous and immoral paths and stands in the way of his attainment of perfection and moral excellence.[1]

In short, man's nature is prone to evil and transgression at a certain stage in his development, and so long as he is devoid of high moral qualities, this evil nature is predominant in him. He is subject to this state so long as he does not walk in the light of true wisdom and knowledge but acts in obedience to the natural inclinations of eating, drinking, sleeping, becoming angry or excited, etc., like the lower animals.

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[1]The Holy Quran, *Sura Yūsuf*, Verse 54. (References of the Holy Quran hereafter given only by the *Sura* and number of the verse. Ed.)

The Second State:

As soon, however, as he frees himself from the control of animal passions and guided by reason and knowledge, puts a check on his natural desires and governs them instead of being governed by them—in short, when a transformation is worked in his soul from grossness to virtue, he then passes out of the physical state and becomes a moral being in the strict sense of the word. The source of the moral state of man is called the *Nafs-lawwāma* or the self-accusing spirit (conscience), in the terminology of the Holy Quran. In the chapter entitled *Al-Qiyāmah* we have:

وَلَآ أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ

> And I call to witness the spirit that blames itself (on every dereliction of duty or on the slightest act of disobedience, being conscious of having offended).[2]

This is the spring from which flows a highly moral life and, on reaching this stage, man is freed from bestiality. The calling to witness of the self-accusing spirit indicates the regard in which it is held. For, the change from the disobedient to the self-accusing spirit; being a sure sign of improvement and purification, makes it deserving of approbation in the sight of God. *Lawwāma* literally means one who reproves severely, and the *Nafs-lawwāma* or the self-accusing spirit has been so called because it upbraids a man for the doing of evil deeds and restrains unbridled passions and bestial appetites. Its tendency on the other hand is to generate noble qualities and a virtuous disposition so to transform life as to bring the whole course and conduct of it to moderation, and to restrain the carnal passions and sensual desires so as to keep them within due bounds. Although as we have said above, the self-accusing spirit upbraids

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[2] *Al-Qiyāmah*, Verse 3.

itself for its faults and frailties, yet it is not complete master of its tendencies, nor is it powerful enough to practise virtue exclusively. The weakness of the flesh still gets the upper hand sometimes and then it stumbles and falls down. Its weakness then resembles that of a child who does not wish to fall but whose infirm legs are sometimes unable to support him. It does not, however, persist in its fault; every failure brings a fresh reproach. In short, at this stage the soul is anxious to attain moral excellence and revolts against disobedience which is the characteristic of the first, or the animal stage, but does, notwithstanding its yearning for virtue, sometimes deviate from the line of duty.

The Third State:

The third or the last stage in the onward movement of the soul is reached on attaining to the source of all spiritual qualities. The soul at this stage is, in the words of the Holy Quran, the *Nafs-mutmainnah*, or the soul at rest. Thus it says:

يَٰٓأَيَّتُهَا ٱلنَّفْسُ ٱلْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ٱرْجِعِىٓ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً
مَّرْضِيَّةً فَٱدْخُلِى فِى عِبَٰدِى وَٱدْخُلِى جَنَّتِى

> O thou soul that art at rest (and restest fully contented with the Lord), return to thy Lord, thou being pleased with Him and He pleased with thee; so enter among My servants and enter into My paradise.[3]

At this stage the soul is freed from all weakness and frailty and is braced with spiritual strength. It is perfectly united with God and cannot exist in separation from Him. As water flows with great force down a slope and, on account of its great mass and the total absence of all obstacles, dashes down with irresistible

[3] *Al-Fajr*, Verses 28-31.

force, so does the soul at this stage, casting off all trammels, flow unrestrained towards its Maker. It is to this that the verse quoted above refers. It is further clear from the words, "O soul that hast found rest in the Lord, return to Him," that it is in this life and not after death that this great transformation is worked and that it is in this world and not elsewhere that access to paradise is granted to it. Again, as the soul has been commanded to return to its Lord (*Rabb* literally, Supporter), it is clear that such a soul finds its support only in its Lord. The love of God is its sustenance and it drinks deep at this fountain of life and is therefore delivered from death. The same idea is expressed elsewhere in the Holy Quran in the following words :

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا ۝ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰهَا

> He who has purified his soul of the carnal passions is saved and shall not be destroyed ; but he who gives vent to unbridled earthly passions should surely despair of life.[4]

In short, these three states of the soul may be called the physical, the moral and the spiritual states of man. Of these, the physical state, viz., that in which man seeks to satisfy the passions of the flesh, is most dangerous when the passions run riot ; for it is then that they deal a death blow to the moral and spiritual qualities of man, and hence this state has been termed the disobedient spirit in the Holy Word of God.

The next question for us to consider is, what is the effect of the teachings of the Holy Quran upon the physical state of man, how does it guide us with respect to it, and what practical limits does it set to the natural inclinations ? It may be remarked at the

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[4]*Al-Shams,* Verses 10-11.

outset that, according to the Muslim Scriptures, the physical state of man is closely connected with his moral and spiritual states, so much so that even his modes of eating and drinking play a part in the moulding of his moral and spiritual qualities. If, therefore, his natural desires are properly regulated, they assume the character of moral qualities and deeply affect his spiritual state. It is for this reason that in all forms of devotion and prayer and in all the injunctions relating to internal purity and moral rectitude the greatest stress has been laid upon external purity and cleanliness and on the proper attitudes of the body. Also the relation between the physical and spiritual natures of man would become evident on a careful consideration of the reaction induced by physical acts and *vice versa*. Weeping, even if artificially induced, saddens the heart while laughter, even artificially stimulated, makes it cheerful. Likewise prostration of the body as is done in Muslim prayer induces humility and inclines the soul towards adoration of the Creator; whereas strutting stimulates vanity and vain glory.

These examples will suffice to illustrate the effect of physical postures upon the spiritual state of a man. Experience also shows the effect produced by food upon the heart and mind. For instance, vegetarians ultimately lose the quality of courage. Thus the result of giving up animal food is weakness of the heart and loss of a noble quality. The operation of the same law is witnessed even among animals, for the herbivorous animals do not possess even a hundredth part of the courage of the carnivora, and the same may be said of birds. There is not the least doubt then that food plays an important part in the formation of character. Further, as total exclusion of meat from one's diet results in certain deficiencies, excess of meat is also injurious to character, for instance, it would tend to destroy the qualities of humility and meekness. Those who adopt the middle

course are heirs to both sets of qualities, viz., courage as well as meekness. It is with this great law in view that the Holy Quran says :

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا

> Eat (meat as well as other food) but do not give way to excess (in any particular form of diet so that your character and health may not suffer from it).[5]

I have spoken of the effect of the physical upon the moral nature of man but it should also be borne in mind that internal experiences also have external manifestations. Grief brings tears into the eyes and joy makes one laugh. Thus there is a natural relation between the body and the soul and all physical acts such as eating, drinking, sleeping, walking, moving, resting, etc., necessarily produce a corresponding effect upon that which pertains to the state of the soul as distinguished from external manifestations. A shock communicated to one point in the brain causes loss of memory, and to another brings about insensibility Air containing the poisonous germs of the plague soon corrupts first the body and then the mind; and in a few hours the whole internal system, in which reside the moral impulses, is impaired and the unfortunate victim passes away like a madman. All this shows that there is a mysterious relation between the body and the soul of man though the solution of the mystery may lie beyond human comprehension.

The Soul Is An Emanation From the Body

Another argument bearing upon the subject in hand is that the body itself is the mother of the soul. The soul does not come from some place in the heavens and enter the body in the womb of the

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[5] *Al-A'rāf*, Verse 32.

mother, but it is as it were a light or an essence that lies concealed in the seed and grows with the growth of the body. The Holy Word of God gives us to understand that the soul grows from the body while it is developed in the womb of the mother. Thus it says:

ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

> Then We bring the body (which has been prepared in the womb) into another form and manifest another creation out of it (which is called the soul), and blessed is God the most excellent Creator who has no equal.[6]

There is a deep secret in the words, "We manifest another creation out of the body." It throws light on the nature of the soul and indicates the strong and mysterious tie between it and the body. The indication which the Word of God has here given us as to the nature of the connection between the body and the soul leads us to other important conclusions. It teaches us that the words which a man speaks and the deeds which he does, if said or done for the sake of God and to manifest His glory, and if regulated by His commandments, are subject to the same Divine law, viz., that in all the sincere outward actions there is a soul hidden as in the seed of man, and as the body of these actions is gradually developed, the hidden soul apears in it. When the complete embodiment of the actions takes place, the soul flashes of a sudden in perfect brightness and glory, and shows itself so far as the spirit can be seen and there apears a plain movement of life. The full development of the body of actions is followed by a blazing of the light within just like a flash of lightning. This stage is allegorically described in the Holy Quran in the following words :

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[6] *Al-Mu'minun*, Verse 16.

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي
فَقَعُوا لَهُ سٰجِدِينَ

> When I have formed the body of it and set right all the manifestations of glory and breathed into it My soul, prostrate yourself (in obedience) before it.[7]

This verse also suggests the same idea, viz., that on the complete embodiment of good actions, the spirit within lights up. This Almighty God describes as His Own soul, thus indicating that it partakes of a Divine nature. For the body is fully developed only after the extinction of the physical desires and, therefore, the Divine light, which before was dim, shines out in full lustre and thus makes it incumbent upon everybody to bow down before the manifestation of this glory. Therefore every one is naturally attracted towards it and falls down upon his face before it, except the spirit of evil which loves darkness.

To return to the subject in hand. The soul is a light which springs up from the body which is being prepared in the womb. By the springing up of the soul, I mean that at first it is hidden and imperceptible, though its essence is contained in the seed itself, and that as the body is gradually developed, the soul grows along with it and becomes manifest. There is not the least doubt that the mysterious relationship of the soul with the seed is in accordance with the design of God and His will. It is a bright essence in the seed itself. It is not a part of it in the sense in which matter is part of matter, but at the same time it would be incorrect to say that it comes from outside, or, as some wrongly imagine, falling upon the earth is mixed with the substance of the seed. It is latent in the seed as fire is latent in the flint. The Holy Word of God lends no support to the view that the

[7] *Al-Hijr*, Verse 30.

soul comes from the heavens as something distinct from the body, or that it falls suddenly upon the earth and enters the womb. The idea is utterly false and totally opposed to the laws of nature. The thousands of insects which we observe daily in stinking and rotten articles of food or in unwashed wounds do not come from outside or descend from heaven. Their existence proves that the soul comes out of the body and is as surely a creation of God as anything else.

The Second Birth of the Soul

From this we conclude that Almighty God Who with His perfect wisdom and omnipotence has created the soul out of the body, has willed and intended that a second birth of the soul should also be made manifest through the body. The movement of the soul depends upon that of the body and if the body is drawn in any direction the soul must follow. The physical state of man's life being of such great importance to the soul, the Word of God could not remain silent on the point. The Holy Quran has, therefore, applied itself abundantly to the reformation of the physical state of man's life. It gives the most valuable and minute directions on all matters of importance with which man is concerned. All his movements, the manner of the satisfaction of all his needs, his family, social and general connections, health and sickness, are all regulated by laws and it is shown how external order and purity have their effect upon the spiritual state of man. Considering the limited time I have at my disposal today, I shall briefly note only a few of the guiding rules. To describe them in detail would require more time than is here available.

Threefold Reformation of Man

A close study of the Word of God on this important point, viz., the injunctions and directions relating to the reformation of the external life of man and

his gradual advancement from a state of barbarity to one of culture and then on until he reaches the highest stage of spiritual development reveals the following all-wise method. In the first place Almighty God has been pleased to lead him out of darkness and raise him up from a savage state by teaching him the rules relating to his ordinary daily actions and mode of social life. Thus the process starts at the lowest point of man's development and, first of all, drawing a line of distinction between man and the lower animals teaches him the elementary rules of morality which may pass under the name of social behaviour. Next, it seeks to improve upon this degree of morality by regulating man's conduct and actions, thus turning them into high moral qualities. Both these developments relate to only one stage of advancement, the difference being only one of degree. The Wise Author of the Universe, has so arranged the system of moral evolution that a person can easily advance from a low state to a higher one.

We pass on now to the next stage of advancement when man completely loses himself in the love of God and in doing His will and his whole life is lived only for the sake of his Master. This is the stage indicated by the word "Islam." It signifies complete resignation to the will and service of God and total forgetfulness of self. Says the Holy Quran :

بَلٰى مَنْ اَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهٗ لِلّٰهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهٗٓ
اَجْرُهٗ عِنْدَ رَبِّهٖ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ

Verily he is saved (i.e., shall attain salvation) who sacrifices his life (or interests) for the sake of God, and submits himself to His will; who does not rest satisfied with mere lip-sincerity, but proves it by righteous conduct. Such a one will surely have his

reward with his Lord, and there shall come no fear upon him, nor shall he be grieved.[8]

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَٰلِكَ أُمِرْتُ
وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Say (O Prophet) my prayers and my sacrifices and my life and my death, are only for God Whose Lordship extends over the whole universe, and Who has no partner. Thus have I been commanded and I am the first Muslim, (i.e., the first to resign himself and to sacrifice his life in the way of Almighty God)[9].

Also :

وَأَنَّ هَٰذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ

This is my path : it is the right one ; therefore, follow it and follow not any other path, for if you do, it will surely lead you away from God.[10]

And again :

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ
وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Say to them (O Prophet), if you love God follow me ; then will God love you and forgive you your sins ; He is surely Forgiving, Merciful.[11]

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[8] *Al-Baqara,* Verse 113.
[9] *Al-An'ām,* Verse 163.
[10] *Al-An'ām,* Verse 154.
[11] *Al-Imrān,* Verse 32.

Now I shall take up and deal with the three states of life, one after the other. But before I proceed to do so, I must repeat the caution that the physical state of man's life, the dominant factor in which is "the disobedient spirit," cannot, according to the Word of God, be treated as something distinct from the moral state. Man's natural inclinations and the desires and passions of the flesh are classified by the Holy Quran as physical conditions. These, when operating under proper regulation and co-ordination, are converted into excellent moral qualities. Similarly no hard and fast line can be drawn between the spheres of the moral and spiritual states. Man passes from one into the other through absolute surrender of self to God, complete purification of the soul, entire elimination of all lower inclinations thus achieving union with God and perfect peace in a state of absolute loyalty to, perfect love of, and complete submission to the Will of God. A person does not begin to deserve the title of man so long as his physical conditions are not elevated into moral qualities, for the natural desires are common to man and the lower animals and there is nothing to mark the distinction between them except such elevation and transmutation.

Nor does the mere possession of a few seeming moral qualities foster spiritual life. For instance, meekness, peacefulness, and a disinclination towards mischief are only so many natural qualities which may be possessed even by a person who is utterly ignorant of the significance of moral and spiritual values. Not a few animals are, for instance, quite harmless and apparently free from savage tendencies. When tamed, they are not ferocious in the least and even submit to chastisement without resistance. Yet, it would be wrong to ascribe moral qualities to them. Similarly persons entertaining the darkest and most superstitious beliefs, nay, sometimes even those who otherwise are guilty of the blackest deeds may possess

such qualities. It is possible for a person to be so tender hearted as not to suffer the killing of the worms in his own wounds, intestines, or stomach. In some instances tenderness of heart may induce a man to give up the use of honey or musk as the procuring of the one involves the destruction and dispersion of the bees and that of the other the killing of the deer. There may even be persons so compassionate who refrain even from the use of pearls or silk, as both are obtained by the destruction of the life of worms. Soft-hearted persons have been known who have preferred to suffer severe pain rather than have leeches applied to them as the alleviation of the pain would be procured at the cost of the lives of the leeches. It is also possible to imagine that the feeling of tenderness may grow so strong in a man that he may even give up the drinking of water and thus put an end to his own life rather than destroy the animalcules contained in the water.

All this I admit, but would any reasonable person consider all such folly to be productive of any moral excellence or necessary to the state of a moral being? Is it thus that the soul of man can be purified of all internal corruptions which are obstacles in the way of the true realization of God? Such harmlessness, or inoffensiveness, which is met with to a greater extent in some animals and birds than in man, cannot be the means of attaining to the desired degree of perfection. Nay, it really amounts to a fight with nature and constitutes opposition to its laws. It is rejecting the faculties and blessings with which nature has endowed us. We cannot attain to spiritual perfection unless we put into operation our various faculties within their appropriate spheres as occasion may require, and walk with perseverance in the path which Almighty God has pointed out to us submitting ourselves wholly to His will. He is like a fish, sacrificed by God's hand, a fish which lives in the waters of His Love.

To resume. As already stated, there are the three factors which give rise to the threefold nature of man, viz., the disobedient spirit, the self-accusing, and the soul at rest. Accordingly, there are three stages of reformation corresponding to these three factors. In the first stage we are concerned with mere ignorant savages whom it is our duty to raise to the status of cultured beings by teaching them the social laws regulating their mutual relations. The first step, therefore, consists in teaching the savage not to walk about naked or devour carcasses, or indulge in other barbarous practices. This is the lowest stage in the reformation of man In humanizing people upon whom no ray of the light of culture has yet fallen, it is necessary, first of all, to take them through this stage and acquaint them with elementary rules of morality. When the savage has learned the rudiments of social conduct, he is prepared for the second stage of reformation He is then taught the high and excellent moral qualities pertaining to humanity as well as the proper use of his faculties and of what lies hidden beneath them. Those who have acquired excellent morals are then prepared for the third stage and, after they have attained to outward perfection, they taste of union with, and the love of, God. These are the three stages which the Holy Quran has prescribed for a wayfarer who desires to travel along the path that leads to God.

The World at the Advent of the Holy Prophet

Our Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) was raised at a time when the whole world had sunk to the lowest depths of ignorance. To this the Holy Quran alludes in the following words :

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ

Both land and water have become corrupt.[12]

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[12] *Al-Rūm*, Verses 42.

The metaphorical phrase translated into plain language would mean the *Ahl-kitāb*, the people who had been given the Scriptures from God, had become corrupt as well as those who had never drunk of the fountain of inspiration. The Quran was, therefore, sent to bring life to the dead as it says :

اِعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

> Know it for certain that God is now going to restore life to the earth which had been dead.[13]

Utter darkness and barbarism at this time prevailed over the whole of Arabia. No social laws were observed and the most despicable deeds were openly committed. There was no limit to the number of women a man might marry and all prohibited things were made lawful. Rapine and incest raged unchecked and not infrequently mothers were taken for wives. It was to prohibit this horrible custom that these words were revealed in the Quran :

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ اُمَّهٰتُكُمْ

> Your mothers are now prohibited to you.[14]

Like beasts they did not even hesitate to devour carcasses and cannibalism was not unknown. There was no vice which was not freely practised by them. The great majority of them did not believe in a future life and not a few were atheists. Infanticide prevailed throughout the whole country, and they mercilessly butchered orphans to rob them of their properties. To the outward eye they had the forms of men but they were totally devoid of rationality, modesty, jealousy, and other manly qualities. Their thirst for wine was excessive and fornication was

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[13] *Al-Hadid,* **Verse 18.**

[14] *Al-Nisā,* **Verse 24.**

committed unscrupulously. Ignorance prevailed so widely that the neighboring people called them *Ummiyin*, or the ignorant. Such is the dark picture of the time and the country in which the Holy Prophet of Arabia (peace and blessings of God be on him) appeared and it was to reclaim such wild and ignorant people that the Word of God came to him.

The Holy Quran—A Perfect Guidance

The threefold reformation of man to which I have called attention was, therefore, destined to be brought about at this period by means of the Holy Quran. It is for this reason that the Holy Book claims to be a perfect guidance for mankind as to it alone was given the opportunity to work a reformation complete in all respects and the other books were never given such an opportunity. The Quran had a grand aim before it It had first to reclaim mankind from savagery and to make them men; then to teach them excellent morals and make them good men, and, finally to take them to the highest pinnacles of advancement and make them godly The Holy Quran gives excellent instructions on these three points.

Attention must also be called to another very important point before I discuss the proper subject of the question, viz., the threefold reformation of man. It should be clearly borne in mind that the Quran does not inculcate any doctrines which are contrary to reason and which, therefore, a person can follow only against his better judgment. The whole purpose of the Holy Book and the pith of its teachings is the threefold reformation of man and all other directions are simply means to this end. As we see that in the treatment of bodily diseases the physician recognizes the necessity of dissecting or performing surgical operations on proper occasions or applying ointments to wounds, etc., so have the teachings of the

Holy Quran also employed these means on fit occasions to serve the purpose when necessary and advisable. All its moral teachings, precepts and doctrines have an all-pervading purpose beneath them which consists in transforming man from the physical state which is imbued with a tinge of savageness into the moral state and from the moral into the spiritual state, which is limitless.

What Is a Moral Quality?

It has already been observed that the physical conditions of man do not differ in quality from his moral state. The fact is that the physical conditions, when subjected to regulation and used within proper limits according to the directions of reason and good judgment, are transformed into moral conditions. Before a man is guided in his actions by the dictates of reason and conscience, his acts do not fall under the heading of moral conditions at all, however much they may resemble them ; they are but natural and instinctive impulses. For instance, the affection and docility which a dog or a sheep or any other domestic animal shows towards its master cannot be designated as courtesy or refined manners, nor can the fierceness of a wolf or a lion be classed as rudeness or misbehaviour. What we call good or ill manners or morals are the results of the exercise of reason that come into play on appropriate occasions. A person who is not guided by the dictates of reason in his conduct may be compared either to a child whose reasoning powers are not yet matured or to a madman who has lost all reason. The only line of distinction that can be drawn between the movements of a madman or a child, on the one hand and the actions of a man of reason on the other, is that the former are only natural impulses while the latter are the result of an exercise of the reasoning faculty. For instance, the

young human being will, as soon as it is born, seek the breast of its mother while a chicken will, after it is hatched, begin to pick up food with its beak. Similarly a leech inherits instinctively the habits of that worm and a serpent or lion the habits of its own kind.

The young human being begins soon after birth to show human peculiarities. As it advances in years, these become more conspicuous It cries louder and its smile develops into laughter. It expresses its pleasure or displeasure in its movements but these movements are still more the result of impulse than of an exercise of the intellect. Such is also man in his savage state when his intellectual faculties are yet in an embryonic state He is subject to the impulses of his nature and whatever he does, he does in obedience to them. His acts are not the result of deliberation. The impulses of his nature subject to external conditions assume an outward shape. It should not, however, be assumed that all these movements are necessarily improper; some of them may resemble the deliberate acts of a reasonable person, but it cannot be denied that they are not preceded by any exercise of the reasoning faculties or by any deep consideration of their propriety or impropriety. Even if we assume the presence of a slight degree of reasoning in some acts of the savage, we cannot class them generally as good or bad actions, for the more powerful factor prompting them is not the reasoning faculty, but an instinctive impulse or a yielding to desire and passion.

In short, we cannot class as moral the acts of a person whose life is akin to that of the savage and who is subject to his natural impulses like the lower animals, infants or madmen. The first stage of a moral being, i.e., of one whose acts may be classed as good or bad morally is that in which he is capable of distinguishing between good and bad actions or between good or bad actions of different degrees.

This takes place when the reasoning faculty is sufficiently well developed to form general ideas and perceive the remoter consequences of actions. It is then that man regrets the omission of a good deed or feels repentence or remorse after doing a bad one. This is the second stage of man's life which the Holy Quran terms *Nafs-lawwāma*, i.e., the self-accusing spirit, (or to take a more familiar term, conscience). But it should be borne in mind that for the savage to attain to this stage of the self-accusing spirit, mere admonition is not sufficient. He must have so much knowledge of God that he should not look upon his own creation by God as an insignificant or meaningless act. This soul-ennobling perception of God can alone lead to actions truly moral and it is for this reason that the Holy Quran inculcates a true knowledge of God along with its admonitions and warnings and assures man that every good or bad action bears fruit which may cause spiritual bliss or torture in this life while a clearer and more palpable reward or punishment awaits him in the next. In short, when man reaches this stage of advancement, which we have called the self-accusing spirit, his reason, knowledge, and conscience reach the stage of development in which a feeling of remorse overtakes him in the doing of unrighteous deeds and he becomes eager to perform good ones. This is the stage in which the actions of a man can be said to be moral.

It is necessary here to define the word *Khulq* (moral.) There are two words alike in form except in respect of the vowel point. One of them is *Khalq*, which means external creation, and the other *Khulq*, which means internal creation or inborn quality. As the perfection of internal creation is achieved through moral excellence and not through the innate passions of man, the former is the proper signification of the word *Khulq* and not the latter.

An Inner Quality Corresponding to Every External Action

We may take this opportunity of exposing the error of the popular view that forbearance, humility, meekness, and the like, are the only qualities which constitute good morals. The fact is that, corresponding to every external action, there is an inner quality which, when exercised in its proper place, is termed moral. For instance, in weeping, the outward action is that of the eye from which tears flow ; but corresponding to this there is in the heart a quality of melting which we may term tenderness, which when properly applied by a moral being, is one of the excellent morals. Again a man uses his hands in defending himself against, or opposing, an enemy, but corresponding to this power of the external organ, there is in the heart a quality which we call courage and this, when properly used, is also one of the high morals, the possession of which is necessary for man to attain perfection. Similarly a man sometimes rescues an oppressed person from his oppressor with his hands or feels impelled to give something to the needy or the hungry or serve mankind in some other way.

All such actions proceed from the inner quality which we call commiseration. Or sometimes a man inflicts punishment upon a wrong-doer and the source of this outward action is the moral quality called vengeance. Or again, there are occasions upon which a man who receives an injury refrains from injuring in return and he passes over the action of the aggressor. This refraining results from the moral quality which we term forbearance. In like manner, a man sometimes employs his hands or feet or brain or wealth in doing good to his fellow-beings. In such cases, the corresponding moral quality is charity The truth is, as we have already said, that all these qualities are only ranked as moral qualities when they are used on

the proper occasion. Thus in the Holy Quran, Almighty God says, addressing the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him):

إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

Verily thou art of excellent morals.[15]

i.e., All the high m ral qualities such as charity, courage, justice, mercy, kindness, truth, highmindedness, etc., are blended in thy person in a perfect and harmonious whole In short, all the qualities with which man is naturally endowed, such as politeness, modesty, honesty, generosity, jealousy, perseverance, chastity, forgiveness, patience, kindness, truth, fidelity, etc., when they are called into action within their proper spheres and on appropriate occasions, fall under the definition of virtue. All these grow out of the natural inclinations and passions of man when the latter are controlled and regulated by reason. The desire for progress is an essential characteristic of man and is not shared by the lower animals. Hence, it is that true religion, good company, and virtuous injunctions transform man's natural inclinations into morals.

Islamic Teachings on the Physical Conditions

After these preliminary remarks we shall consider the teachings of the Holy Quran, relating to the first stage of the threefold reformation, which we have referred to above. This is the first stage in man's civilization and it regulates that particular aspect of morals which we term *Adab* (manners.). Laws are laid down to guide the actions of daily life, and all that is necessary to make the savage a social being is inculcated. The injunctions of the Holy Quran on this point are as follows:

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[15] *Al-Qalam,* Verse 5.

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ اُمَّهٰتُكُمْ وَبَنٰتُكُمْ وَاَخَوٰتُكُمْ وَ
عَمّٰتُكُمْ وَخٰلٰتُكُمْ وَبَنٰتُ الْاَخِ وَبَنٰتُ الْاُخْتِ وَ
اُمَّهٰتُكُمُ الّٰتِيْٓ اَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَاَخَوٰتُكُمْ مِّنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ
وَاُمَّهٰتُ نِسَآئِكُمْ وَرَبَآئِبُكُمُ الّٰتِيْ فِيْ حُجُوْرِكُمْ
مِّنْ نِّسَآئِكُمُ الّٰتِيْ دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَكُوْنُوْا
دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَحَلَآئِلُ اَبْنَآئِكُمُ
الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ اَصْلَابِكُمْ وَاَنْ تَجْمَعُوْا بَيْنَ الْاُخْتَيْنِ
اِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا

Your mothers are forbidden to you and so are your daughters, and your sisters, and your aunts, both on the father's and on the mother's side and your nieces on the brother's and the sister's side, and your foster sisters and the mothers of your wives and your step-daughters who are your wards born of your wives to whom you have gone in (but if you have not gone into them, it shall be no sin) and the wives of your sons who are the issue of your loins, and it is also forbidden that you shall have two sisters as wives at one and the same time; this, that you did before, is now forbidden to you.[16]

لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ اَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَآءَ كَرْهًا

It is not allowed you to be the heirs of your wives against their will.[17]

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[16] *Al-Nisā*, Verse 24
[17] *Al-Nisā*, Verse 20

وَلَا تَنكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُم مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا
قَدْ سَلَفَ

And marry not women whom your fathers have married but what is past shall be excused (for you did it in ignorance).[18]

الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ ۖ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
الْكِتَابَ حِلٌّ لَّكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ ۖ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ
غَيْرَ مُسَافِحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ

Things good and clean are legalized to you. And the food of the People of the Book is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them. And you are allowed to take for wives virtuous women from among the believers and virtuous women from among those to whom the Scriptures have been given before you, provided you give them their legal portions and live chastely with them without fornication or secret intimacy.[19]

There was a custom among some ignorant Arabs that if children were not born to a man, his wife secretely went to another man, for getting children. It is for the extirpation of this savage custom which is here called *musāfahāt* that these words have been used.

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[18] *Al-Nisā*, Verse 23.

[19] *Al-Mā'ida*, Verse 6.

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوٓا أَنْفُسَكُمْ

Do not commit suicide.[20]

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوٓا أَوْلَادَكُمْ

Do not kill your children.[21]

يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَدْخُلُوْا بُيُوْتًا غَيْرَ
بُيُوْتِكُمْ حَتّٰى تَسْتَأْنِسُوْا وَتُسَلِّمُوْا عَلٰٓى أَهْلِهَا ذٰلِكُمْ
خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَجِدُوْا فِيْهَآ
أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوْهَا حَتّٰى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ قِيْلَ
لَكُمُ ارْجِعُوْا فَارْجِعُوْا هُوَ أَزْكٰى لَكُمْ

Enter not into houses other than your own like savages without permission but wait until you have asked leave, and when you enter, salute the inmates saying "peace be with you"; this is better for you that you may be mindful. And if you find no one in the house, enter not till the owner of the house gives you leave; and if the owner of the house asks you to go back, return forthwith; that is more decent for you.[22]

وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوْتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا

And you should come into houses by the doors thereof.[23]

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[20] *Al-Nisā,* Verse 30.

[21] *Al-An'ām,* Verse 152.

[22] *Al-Nūr,* Verses 28-29.

[23] *Al-Baqara,* Verse 190.

وَإِذَا حُيِّيتُم بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا

And when you are saluted with a salutation, salute the person with a better salutation or at least return the same.[24]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنصَابُ
وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُفْلِحُونَ

Wine and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are only an abomination of Satan's work; avoid them therefore that you may prosper.[25]

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنزِيرِ وَمَا
أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَ
الْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ
وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ

Forbidden to you is the flesh of an animal which dies of itself, and blood, and swine's flesh, and all that on which is invoked the name of one other than Allah; and the strangled; and that which has been beaten to death; and that which has been killed by a fall and that which has been gored to death; and that of which a wild animal has eaten, except that which you have properly slaughtered; and that which has been slaughtered at an altar as an offering to idols.[26]

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[24] *Al-Nisā*, Verse 87.
[25] *Al-Mā'ida,* Verse 91.
[26] *Al-Mā'ida,* Verse 4.

يَسْئَلُونَكَ مَاذَآ أُحِلَّ لَهُمْ قُلْ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبٰتُ

And if they ask thee what is then lawful for them to eat, say everything good and clean is allowed to you, (only the dead and the unclean things which resemble the dead are forbidden).[27]

يَآأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوٓا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجٰلِسِ
فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انْشُزُوا فَانْشُزُوا

When it is said to you, make room in your assemblies for others, then make ye room (that others may sit down). And when it is said to you "rise up," then rise ye up.[28]

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا

Eat and drink everything that is good (whether flesh or herbs), but be moderate in your diet and do not exceed the proper limits.[29]

وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

Do not indulge in idle talk, but speak rightly when occasion requires it.[30]

وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ

And let your clothes be clean and let everything that belongs to you, (your body, your houses and streets, and every place where you sit), be purified from dirt and uncleanliness.[31]

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[27] *Al-Mā'ida,* Verse 5.
[28] *Al-Mujādalah,* Verse 12.
[29] *Al-A'rāf,* Verse 32.
[30] Al-*Ahzāb,* Verse 71.
[31] *Al-Muddassir*, Verses 5-6.

وَاقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ

Let your pace be middling, i.e., neither too swift nor too slow, and let your voice be neither too loud nor too low (unless the occasion requires otherwise).[32]

وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ

And when you set out on a journey, make provision for it in every way, and surely the best provision is righteousness.[33]

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا

And if you are unclean, purify yourselves by bathing all over.[34]

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

And of your substances, there should be a due and stated portion for those who ask and for dumb animals.[35]

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانْكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ
مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا
فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا

There is no harm in your marrying the orphan girls who are your wards, but if you are apprehensive that, as they have no guardian besides yourselves, you may therefore be sometimes tempted to deal with them unjustly, then marry of other women who have guardians, two, three, or four,

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32 *Luqmān,* Verse 20.
33 *Al-Baqara,* Verse 198.
34 *Al-Mā'ida,* Verse 7.
35 *Al-Zāriyāt,* Verse 20.

provided you can act equitably towards them in all respects, but if you cannot, then marry only one (though you may need more).[36]

The Holy Quran has granted a permission first and put a restraint then. The former was necessary because an undue restraint would have resulted in a general spread of fornication and the latter checked excess in the number of wives, which was unlimited in the days of ignorance.

وَاٰتُوا النِّسَآءَ صَدُقٰتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً

And give women their dowry as a free gift.[37]

In short, this is the primary step which the Holy Quran has taken for the reformation of man and these are the rules by means of which it has in the past raised, and claims now to raise, savages to the status of social beings. These teachings simply contain rules of good conduct and social relations. So far it does not inculcate teachings containing high morals which are intended to make men morally great. It was necessary that this step should have first been taken for people whose regeneration was the primary object of our Holy Prophet's appearance and who were actually living in a state of savagery far surpassing that of other peoples. They observed no law which could differentiate them from savages. It was, therefore, necessary that the Holy Quran should have first of all taught them the rules of social behaviour.

Why Swines' Flesh is Prohibited?

One point deserves special notice. The flesh of *Khinzeer*, i.e., a swine, is one of those things which the Muslims have been forbidden to eat. The very name

36 *Al-Nisā*, Verse 4.
37 *Al-Nisā*, Verse 5.

of this foul animal contains an allusion to the reason for the pohibition of its flesh. It is a combination of *Khinz* and *ara*, the first part meaning "very foul" and the second "I see." The word literally means "I see it very foul." The name which God gave this animal in the beginning, therefore, points to its foulness But what is still more significant is that in Hindi this animal is known by the name of *Suar*, which is composed of two words, *su* and *ar*, the latter part being identical with the Arabic word and the former being the exact equivalent of the first part of the Arabic form. The Hindi word thus means exactly the same as the Arabic. The Arabic origin of a Hindi word is not surprising, for as we will show in the book, *Minan-ur-Rahmān*, Arabic is the mother of all languages and its words are frequently met with in all languages. *Suar* is thus an Arabic word.

In Hindi, this animal is also known as *Bad* meaning bad or foul, which is probably a translation of the original Arabic word. It appears that at an early age in the world's history, when dispersion had taken place, the word *Suar*, which is the exact equivalent of and synonymous with the still prevalent Arabic form *Khinzeer*, was used to signify the name of this animal, and it has kept the original form after a lapse of thousands of years. The Sanskrit form of the word may have changed a little; but there can be no doubt that the root is Arabic, for it supplies the reason for which the name was given, and the word *Khinzeer* attests to the truth of the same view. As to the applicability of this sense of the word to the habits of this animal, there can be no question. Everybody knows that it is extremely ugly and lives upon filth, and is moreover the most shameless of all creatures. The reason of its prohibition is thus evident. Taken as food, its foul flesh will have the most injurious effect upon the body as well as the soul, for as we have shown above, food affects the whole external as well as internal system of man. The pre-Islamic

physicians of the Greek school also held that the flesh of this animal produced shamelessness. On similar grounds the Holy Quran has prohibited the flesh of animals that die a natural death, for it also affects both physical health and morals. Animals strangled or killed by a blow are treated like those that die a natural death.

Islamic Teachings on the Moral Conditions

Having briefly indicated the directions given by the Holy Quran in the first stage of reformation, we now come to the second. After giving the savage the necessary rules of guidance, it undertakes to teach him high morals. Time and space do not permit us to treat this subject at full length here. We shall, therefore, mention by way of illustration, only a few of the moral qualities upon which the Holy Quran has laid stress. All moral qualities fall under two heads : (*a*) those which enable a man to abstain from inflicting injury upon his fellow men, and (*b*) those which enable him to do good to others. To the first class belong the rules which regulate the motives, designs, and actions of man so that he may not injure the life, property, or honor of his fellow-beings through his tongue or hand or eye or any other member of his body. The second class comprises all rules calculated to guide the motives and actions of man so as to enable him to do good to others by means of the faculties with which God has endowed him or to proclaim the glory or honor of others or to forbear from imposing a penalty which an offender has incurred (thus conferring upon him the positive benefit of having escaped a physical punishment or loss of property which he would otherwise have suffered) or to punish him in such a manner that the punishment turns out to be a blessing for him.

Chastity

The moral qualities which fall under the heading of abstaining from injuries are four in number. Each one of these is designated by a single word in the Arabic language whose rich vocabulary supplies an appropriate word for different human conceptions, behaviours, and morals. First of all, we shall consider *Ihsān*, or chastity. This word signifies the virtue which relates to the act of procreation in men and women. A man or woman is said to be *Muhsan* or *Muhsana* when he or she abstains from illegal intercourse and its preliminaries which bring disgrace and ruin upon the head of the sinners in this life and severe punishment in the next, besides the disgrace and distress inflicted upon those connected with them. None is more wicked than the infamous villain who causes the loss of a wife to a husband and of a mother to her children, and thus violently disturbs the peace of a whole household, bringing ruin upon the head of both the guilty wife and the innocent husband and children.

The first thing to remember about this priceless moral quality, which we call *Ihsān*, i.e., chastity, is that no one deserves credit for refraining from satisfying his carnal desires illegally if nature has not granted him those desires. The words "moral quality," therefore, cannot be applied to the mere act of refraining from such a course unless nature has also made a man capable of committing the evil deed. It is refraining under such circumstances, i.e., against the power of the passions which nature has placed in man, that deserves to be credited as a high moral quality. Nonage, impotence, emasculation or old age nullify the existence of the moral quality we term chastity, although a refraining from the illegal act exists in these cases. But the fact is that in such cases it is a natural condition, and there is no resistance of passion; and, consequently, no propriety or impropriety is involved. This, as we have already said, is

an important distinction between natural conditions and moral qualities. In the former, there is no tendency to go to the opposite direction, while in the latter, there is a struggle between the good and evil passions which necessitates the application of the reasoning faculty. There is no doubt then that, as above indicated, children under the age of puberty and men who have lost the power upon which restrictions are to be imposed, cannot claim to possess a moral quality, though their conduct might resemble chastity. It is only a natural condition over which they have no control.

The directions contained in the Holy Word of God for the attainment of this noble quality are described in the following words :

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يَغُضُّوْا مِنْ اَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوْا
فُرُوْجَهُمْ ذٰلِكَ اَزْكٰى لَهُمْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُوْنَ
وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنٰتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ اَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ
فُرُوْجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِيْنَ زِيْنَتَهُنَّ اِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا
وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلٰى جُيُوْبِهِنَّ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِاَرْجُلِهِنَّ
لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِيْنَ مِنْ زِيْنَتِهِنَّ وَتُوْبُوْا اِلَى اللّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا
اَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ

Say to the believing men that they should restrain their eyes (from looking upon strange women whose sight may excite their carnal passions, and that on such occasions they should cast down their eyes.) Say to them also that they should observe continence (and so keep their ears from the hearing of sweet voices and songs of strange women and stories of their beauty) ; for this is the best way of having pure sights and hearts. Surely Allah is aware of what they do.

Say to the believing women that they refrain from casting their looks upon strange men (and restrain their ears from listening to their lustful voices) and observe continence; and that they display not the decorated parts of their bodies except those which are external; and that they draw their veils over their bosom (so as to cover their heads and ears and necks and breasts); and let them not strike their feet together like dancers. This shall be a sure method of saving them from stumbling before evil. And they should all turn to God and pray that He should protect them from stumbling.[38]

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

Draw not near unto fornication, (i.e., keep away from paths which might lead to a commission of this sin), for he who commits fornication does an extremely wicked deed, and it is an evil way, (for it keeps back from the goal and is a dangerous obstacle in attaining the desired perfection).[39]

وَلْيَسْتَعْفِفِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا

And let those who cannot find a match employ other means to preserve their continence (as fasting or taking light food or doing hard work).[40]

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ
رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا

Some people have devised methods of their own for restraining themselves from

[38] *Al-Nūr*, Verses 31-32.
[39] *Bani Isrā'il*, Verse 33.
[40] *Al-Nūr*, Verse 34.

sexual relations as by adopting celibacy or monasticism (and thus deprecating marriage) or by submitting themselves to castration, but all these methods have been invented by people themselves. We did not prescribe these to them, and the result was that they could not observe those innovations as they ought to have observed.[41]

Here Almighty God negatives the assertion of His having prescribed the methods of castration, etc., for had these been the commandments of the Almighty, all the people would have had to observe these rules and then the human race would long since have disappeared from the face of the earth. Apart from the disadvantages and immorality attaching to this evil practice, it amounts to finding fault with the Creator for having created such a power in man. Moreover, it can be readily perceived that there is no merit in being unable to do an act. Credit is due to him alone who resists the evil tendency and overcomes the evil passion out of fear of God. The person who has the capacity, deserves a twofold credit, viz., for its exercise in the proper place and for refraining from exercising it outside its proper sphere. But the man who has lost the capacity is not entitled to either of these. He is like a child and deserves no credit for refraining from what he has lost the power to do. There is no resistance, no overcoming, and consequently, no merit.

These verses not only contain excellent teachings for the preservation of chastity, but also point out five aids towards observing continence. These are: restraining the eyes from looking upon strangers, and the ears from hearing strange voices exciting lust, or hearing the love stories of strange men and women, avoiding every occasion where there may be risk of being involved in the wicked deed, and last of all, fasting, etc., in case of celibacy.

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[41]*Al-Hadid*, Verse 28.

We can confidently claim that the excellent teachings concerning chastity, together with the aids towards continence as contained in the Holy Quran, are a peculiarity of Islam. One particular point deserves special attention. The natural propensity of man, in which sexual appetite takes its roots and over which man cannot have full control except by undergoing a thorough transformation, is that whenever there is an occasion for it, it flares up and places him in serious danger. The Divine injunction in this respect is, therefore, not that we may look upon strange women and their beauty and ornaments or their gait and dancing so long as we do it with pure intent, nor that it is lawful for us to listen to their sweet songs or to the stories of their love and beauty, provided it is done with a pure heart, but that it is never lawful for us to cast glances at them whether with a pure or an impure heart. We are forbidden to do an act in the doing of which we are not treading upon sure ground. We must avoid every occasion which might make us stumble. Unrestrained looks are sure to lead one into danger. Therefore, we are commanded not only not to look at a woman lustfully, but not to look at her at all so that the eye and the heart should remain pure and secure against temptation. If the eye is given to roving in search of female beauty, it might lead its owner into danger. For the attainment and preservation of true chastity, therefore, there could be no higher teaching and no nobler doctrine than that inculcated by the Holy Quran. To let loose a hungry dog where meat abounds and then to expect that it would restrain itself, is a vain hope. The Word of God, therefore, restrains the carnal desires of man, even from smouldering in secret, and enjoins upon him to avoid the occasions where there is even a risk of the evil passions being excited.

This is the secret underlying the principle of the seclusion of women in Islam. It is sheer ignorance of the teachings of that religion to suggest that seclusion

means shutting up women like prisoners in a jail. The object of seclusion is that both men and women should be restrained from intermingling freely and that neither sex should be at liberty to display its attraction and beauty to the other sex. This rule is conducive to the good of both sexes. It should further be borne in mind that *Ghaddi Basar* in Arabic means the casting down of one's eyes when the object in view is not one which is proper for a person to look at freely and not the restraining of one's looks on appropriate occasions. A person who is striving after purity of heart should not, like savages, stare in every direction. The casting down of eyes on proper occasions is the first requirement of social life. The habit, without causing any serious disadvantage to man in his social relations, has the invaluable advantage of making him perfect in one of the highest morals which we call chastity.

Honesty

We come next to the second moral quality of refraining from injury which is called in Arabic *Amānat*, i.e., honesty, or integrity. This consists in not injuring others by cheating them or taking unlawful possession of their properties. This quality is naturally met within man. An infant, free as it is from every bad habit, is averse to sucking the milk of a woman other than its mother if it has not been entrusted to her before it has developed any discrimination. This instinctive impulse in the infant is the root from which flows the natural inclination to be honest, which is later developed into the moral quality known as honesty. The true principle of honesty is that there should be the same aversion to the dishonest taking of another's property as the child has to sucking the milk of a woman who is not its mother. In the child, however, this is not a moral quality but only a natural impulse, inasmuch as it is not regulated by any principle or exercised with discrimination. The

child has no choice in the matter and, unless there is a choice, the action not being the action of a moral being cannot be included in the category of moral conditions. A person who, like the child, shows this inclination in obedience to the requirements of his nature without looking to the propriety of the occasion, cannot, in the strict sense of the word, be called an honest and faithful man. A person who does not strictly observe the conditions which raise this natural inclination to the status of a moral quality cannot lay claim to it although his action might, to outward appearance, resemble the action of moral being which is done with all the requisites and after a due consideration of its propriety. We cite a few verses from the Holy Quran bearing upon the subject :

وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَآءَ اَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِيْ جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ
قِيٰمًا وَّارْزُقُوْهُمْ فِيْهَا وَاكْسُوْهُمْ وَقُوْلُوْا لَهُمْ
قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوْفًا وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتٰمٰى حَتّٰٓى اِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ فَاِنْ
اٰنَسْتُمْ مِّنْهُمْ رُشْدًا فَادْفَعُوْٓا اِلَيْهِمْ اَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا
تَاْكُلُوْهَآ اِسْرَافًا وَّبِدَارًا اَنْ يَّكْبَرُوْا وَمَنْ كَانَ
غَنِيًّا فَلْيَسْتَعْفِفْ وَمَنْ كَانَ فَقِيْرًا فَلْيَاْكُلْ
بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ فَاِذَا دَفَعْتُمْ اِلَيْهِمْ اَمْوَالَهُمْ
فَاَشْهِدُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ حَسِيْبًا

And if there are among you any owners of property who are weak of understanding, being minors or orphans, and have not sufficient prudence for the management of their affairs, you should assume full control over their property as a Court of Wards, and do not make over to them that which God has placed with you as a means of support and as stock of trade, but assign them a portion

of it such as is necessary for their maintenance and clothing; and speak to them useful words such as may sharpen their intellects and mature their understandings, and train them for the business which is most suited for their capacities, giving them full instruction in these respects. And examine them in whatever you instruct them in, so that you may be able to see if they have made any progress. And when they attain the age of maturity and you perceive that they are able to manage their affairs well, hand over their substance to them. And do not waste it profusely, nor consume it hastily under the fear that they will shortly be of age to receive what belongs to them. If the guardian is rich, he should abstain entirely from taking remuneration from the orphan's estate; but if he is poor, he should take a reasonable remuneration. (It was a well known rule among the Arabs that the guardians of an orphan's property, if they had a mind to take any remuneration for their services, took it, so long as possible, out of the profit which the trade brought in and did not touch the capital. The Holy Quran permits the taking of recompense in this reasonable manner). And when you make over their substance to them, do it in the presence of witnesses. God takes sufficient account of your action.[42]

وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّةً ضِعٰفًا
خَافُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتٰمٰى ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا
يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا

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[42] *Al-Nisā*, Verses 6-7.

> And those who are dying and leave behind them young and weakly offspring should be careful lest they make a bequest detrimental to the rights of children. Surely they who swallow the substance of orphans unjustly, swallow but fire and they shall at last themselves be drawn into the fire.[43]

This which God has taught is true, honesty and faithfulness, and its various requisites are clearly set forth in the verses quoted above. Honesty, which lacks any of the requisites, cannot be classed as one of the high moral qualities, but a natural condition in its crude state and not proof against every breach of faith. Elsewhere the Holy Quran says :

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوْٓا اَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْلُوْا بِهَآ
اِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوْا فَرِيْقًا مِّنْ اَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ
بِالْاِثْمِ وَاَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ

> Do not consume each other's wealth unjustly nor offer it to judges as a bribe so that with their aid, you may seize other men's property dishonestly.[44]

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَاْمُرُكُمْ اَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْاَمٰنٰتِ اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهَا

> Verily God enjoins you to give back your trusts to their owners.[45]

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَآئِنِيْنَ

> For verily God does not love the treacherous.[46]

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43 *Al-Nisā*, Verses 10-11.
44 *Al-Baqara*, Verse 189.
45 *Al-Nisā*, Verse 59.
46 *Anfāl*, Verse 59.

أَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُخْسِرِينَ وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

Give just measure when you measure out; and weigh with an exact and true balance. And defraud not men in their substance and do not walk upon the earth with the intention of acting corruptly therein (i.e., committing theft or dacoity, or picking pockets, or otherwise unlawfully seizing other men's property.[47]

وَلَا تَتَبَدَّلُوا الْخَبِيثَ بِالطَّيِّبِ

And do not give worthless things, in substitution or in exchange for good ones (for as it is unlawful for one person to lay hold of another's substance wrongfully, so is it also unjust to sell things of an inferior and worthless quality or give them in exchange for those of a higher one).[48]

These are comprehensive injunctions against all sorts of dishonest dealings, and every breach of faith comes within them. Separate offences are not enumerated here for a comprehensive list of them would have required much space; and even then, it would have been difficult to set a limit to them. The Holy Quran has, therefore, set out a general principle which comprehends in its plain meaning all sorts of dishonesty. In short, a person who shows honesty in some of his dealings but is not scrupulous about it to the smallest degree and does not observe the minutest rules is not gifted with the moral quality, but acts out of habit in obedience to the natural inclination and without applying the faculty of reason.

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[47]*Al-Shu'arā*, Verses 182-184.
[48]*Al-Nisā*, Verse 3.

Meekness

Coming to the third class of morals falling within the first division, we have to deal with the quality known in Arabic as *Hudna* or *Haun*. It consists in refraining from causing bodily hurt to another person and thus establishing conditions of peace upon earth. Peaceableness is, no doubt, a blessing for humanity and must be valued for the great good which proceeds from it. The natural inclination out of which this moral quality develops is witnessed in the young of the human species in the form of attachment. It is plain that, divested of reason, man cannot realize peaceableness or hostility. A natural inclination towards submission and attachment so early witnessed in the young human being is, therefore, only the germ out of which grows the high moral quality of peaceableness. It cannot itself be classed as moral so long as it is not consciously resorted to in consequence of the exercise of reason. It is otherwise when reason and judgment come to its assistance. The directions contained in the Holy Quran in this respect may be briefly noticed :

وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ

There is much good in agreement.[49]

وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ

And live peaceably with one another.[50]

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا

And if they incline to peace, do thou also incline to it.[51]

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49 *Al-Nisā*, Verse 129.
50 *Anfāl*, Verse 62.
51 *Anfāl*, Verse 2.

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمٰنِ الَّذِيْنَ يَمْشُوْنَ عَلَى الْاَرْضِ هَوْنًا

And the servants of the Merciful are those who walk meekly upon the earth.[52]

وَاِذَا مَرُّوْا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوْا كِرَامًا

And when they hear frivolous discourse (which they fear might lead to altercation) they pass on with dignity (and do not pick up quarrels over trifling matters) ; i.e , they do not take up a combative attitude so long as no substantial injury is inflicted upon them.[53]

The guiding principle of peaceableness is that one should not flare up at the slightest opposition to one's wishes. The word *Laghw*, used in this verse needs explanation. A word or deed is said to be *Laghw* or frivolous when it causes no substantial loss or material injury to its object, although said or done with a mischievous or bad intention. Meekness requires that no notice should be taken of such words or deeds and that a man should behave with dignity on such occasions. But, if the injury is not trivial and causes material loss to life, property, or honor, the quality required to meet such an emergency is not meekness but *Afw*, or forgiveness, which shall be treated in its proper place.

اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ فَاِذَا الَّذِيْ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهٗ
عَدَاوَةٌ كَاَنَّهٗ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيْمٌ

Turn away the word or deed which is vain or frivolous with that which is better, and Lo ! the person between whom and thyself there was enmity shall become, as it were, thy warmest friend.[54]

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[52]*Al-Furqān*, Verse 64.
[53]*Al-Furqān*, Verse 73.
[54]*Hā-Mim*, Verse 35.

In fine, the overlooking of trivial injuries is included in peaceableness.

Politeness

The fourth and last of the morals of the first division is *Rifq*, or politeness The preliminary stage of this quality, as witnessed in the child, is *Talāqat*, or cheerfulness. Before the child learns to speak, the cheerfulness of its face serves the same purpose as kind words in a grown-up man. But the propriety of the occasion is an essential condition in classing politeness as a high moral quality. The teachings of the Quran on this point are as follows:

وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا

And speak that which is good to men.[55]

لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا خَيْرًا
مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَآءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَآءٍ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّكُنَّ خَيْرًا
مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوْا بِالْاَلْقَابِ

Let not men laugh other men to scorn who haply may be better than themselves, neither let women laugh other women to scorn who haply may be better than themselves. Neither defame one another, nor call one another by nicknames.[56]

اِجْتَنِبُوْا كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ اِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ
اِثْمٌ وَّلَا تَجَسَّسُوْا وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَّعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا
وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيْمٌ

Avoid entertaining frequent suspicions, for some suspicions are crimes. Pry not into

[55] *Al-Baqara*, Verse 84.
[56] *Al-Hujurāt*, Verse 12.

other men's failings, neither let any of you traduce another in his absence, and fear God, for God is Relenting and Merciful.[57]

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ اِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ
وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ اُولٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُوْلًا

And accuse not another of a crime if you have no sure proof of his guilt; verily, the hearing and the sight and the heart shall all be called to account for this.[58]

Forgiveness

Having finished the first division of morals, viz., those relating to the avoidance of mischief, we come now to the second heading under which we shall give examples of the moral qualities taught by the Holy Quran for doing good to others. The first of these is *Afw*, i.e., forgiveness. The person to whom substantial injury has been caused has the right to obtain a redress by bringing the offender to law or himself dealing out suitable punishment to him; and, therefore, when he foregoes his right and forgives the offender, he does him a real good. The Holy Quran contains the following injunctions upon this point:

وَالْكٰظِمِيْنَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِيْنَ عَنِ النَّاسِ

They are the doers of good who master their anger and forgive others when it is proper to do so.[59]

وَجَزٰٓؤُا سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا فَمَنْ عَفَا وَاَصْلَحَ
فَاَجْرُهٗ عَلَى اللّٰهِ

57 *Al-Hujurāt,* Verse 13.
58 *Bani Isrā'il,* Verse 37.
59 *Al-Imrān,* Verse 135.

> The recompense of evil is a penalty proportionate thereto, but if a person forgives, and this forgiveness is exercised on the right occasion so that matters amend thereby, he shall receive his reward for it from God.[60]

This verse furnishes the guiding rule as to the occasions of forgiveness. The Holy Quran does not teach unconditional forgiveness and non-resistance of evil on every occasion nor does it lay down that punishment is not to be inflicted upon the offender under any circumstances. The principle which it lays down commends itself to every reasonable person. It requires the injured person to exercise his judgment, and see whether the occasion calls for punishment or forgiveness. The course which is calculated to improve matters should then be adopted. The offender would, under certain circumstances, benefit by forgiveness and mend his ways for the future. But on other occasions forgiveness may produce the contrary effect and encourage the culprit to commit worse deeds.

The Word of God does not, therefore, enjoin nor indeed permit that we should go on forgiving faults blindly. It requires us to consider and weigh the matter first and see what course is likely to lead to real good. As there are persons of a vindictive nature who carry the spirit of revenge to an excess and do not forget an injury for generations, there are others who are too prone to forgive on every occasion. Excess in mildness, like excess in vengeance, leads to dangerous consequences. The person who winks at gross immoralities or forbears an attack upon his honor or chastity may be said to forgive; but his forgiveness is a weakness that strikes at the root of nobility, chastity, and self-respect. No sensible person could praise it as a high moral quality. It is for this reason that the Holy Quran places the limits of propriety even upon forgiveness and does

60 *Al-Shūrā*, Verse 41.

not recognize every display of this quality as a moral quality unless it is exercised upon the right occasion. The mere giving up of a claim to requital from an offender, whatever the circumstances and however serious the nature of the offence, is far from being a great moral quality to which men should aspire. The overlooking of injuries is natural quality which we witness even in a child which is not yet able to think and to reason. The mere presence of this quality in a person, therefore, does not entitle him to any credit unless he shows us by its use on the right occasion shat he possesses it as a moral quality. The distinction between natural and moral qualities should be clearly borne in mind. The inborn or natural qualities of man are transformed into moral qualities when a person refrains from doing an act upon the right occasion and after due consideration of the good or evil that is likely to result from it. Many of the lower animals are quite harmless and do not resist when evil is done to them. A cow may be said to be innocent and a lamb meek, but to neither do we attribute the high moral qualities which man aspires after, for they are not gifted with reason and do not know right from wrong. It is the occasion only upon which anything is done that justifies or condemns a deed; and the wise and perfect Word of the Omniscient God has, therefore, imposed this condition upon every moral quality.

Goodness

The second moral quality by means of which man can do good to others is *Adl*, i.e., good in return for good; the third, *Ihsān*, i.e., kindness; and the fourth, *Eetāi zil qurbā*, i.e., the tenderness as of kindred. Thus the Holy Quran says:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَآئِ ذِی
الْقُرْبٰى وَيَنْهٰى عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ

God commands you to do good in return for good, and (if you can avail yourself of an opportunity of doing more than mere justice) to do good without having received any benefit, and (if it befits the occasion) you should bestow gifts with the natural kindness of kindred; and He forbids exceeding the limits of justice and directing goodness to a wrong end, the carrying to excess or fixing upon an improper object the feeling of tenderness.[61]

This verse calls attention to three stages in the doing of good. The lowest stage is that in which man does good to his benefactors only. Even an ordinary person, who has the sense to appreciate the goodness of others, can acquire this quality and do good in return for good. From this there is an advance to the second stage in which a person takes the initiative to do good to others. It consists in bestowing favours upon persons who cannot claim them as a right. This quality, excellent as it is, occupies a middle position. To it often attaches the infirmity that the doer expects thanks or prayers in return for the good he does and the slightest opposition from the object of compassion is apt to be resented as ingratitude. He would fain have an acknowledgment of the benefit conferred and is led sometimes to take advantage of his position by laying upon the other some burden which he would not have otherwise willingly borne. To remedy this, the Holy Quran has warned the doer of good saying:

لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقٰتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذٰى

Make not your charity, which should proceed from sincere motives, void by reminding those whom you relieve of what you have done for them, or by injuring them.[62]

[61] *Al-Nahl*, Verse 91.
[62] *Al-Baqara*, Verse 265.

The word *Sadaqa*, which is rendered in English into alms, is derived from *Sidq*, meaning sincerity. If, therefore, there is no sincerity in the deed, it is mere show and there is no charity. In short, this is an infirmity attached to the doing of good to another that the doer is led sometimes to remind the person relieved of his obligation or to boast of it. A third stage has therefore been taught by the Holy Word of God which is free from every imperfection. To attain this perfection, man should not think of the good he has done nor expect even an expression of gratitude from the person upon whom the benefit is conferred. The good should proceed from sincere sympathy like that which is felt by the nearest relatives; by a mother, for instance, for her children. This is the last and the highest stage of kindness to the creatures of God. Beyond this, man cannot aspire to anything higher. This stage has been termed *Eetāi zil qurbā*, or the kindness of kindred.

But, from the lowest to the highest stage of doing good, an essential condition has been imposed upon all, viz., that it should be done on the proper occasion; for the verse affirms, in plain words, that these noble qualities are liable, unless exercised with great care, to degenerate into vice: *Adl*, or the requital of goodness becomes *Fahshā*, or an undue excess productive of harm rather than good; *Ihsān*, or the doing of simple good becomes *Munkar*, i.e., a thing which, when ill-bestowed, conscience rejects and from which reason recoils; *Eetāi zil qurbā*, or the sympathetic feeling like that of kindred, when directed to a wrong end becomes *Baghy*, or oppression. *Baghy*, originally means the rain which by its excess destroys the crops. Therefore, any excess or deficiency in the doing of that which would otherwise have been most beneficial, is termed *Baghy*. Nor, it should be borne in mind, is the mere doing of good in any of the three forms above mentioned a high moral quality unless attested to as such by the propriety of the occasion and the exercise

of judgment. These are natural conditions and inborn qualities which are transformed into moral qualities by good judgment and by their exercise on the right occasion.

Upon the subject of *Ihsān*, or the doing of good, the Holy Quran has also the following injunctions in every one of which the definitive *al* calls attention to the particular condition that the proper occasion should in each case be observed. Thus it says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنفِقُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ
وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا
الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ

O you who believe, bestow alms or give by way of charity from the good things which you have legally acquired (i.e., in which there is no mixture of property acquired by theft or bribes or misappropriation or by oppression or by any other dishonest or unjust means); and let the idea be far from your heart of giving in charity that which you have gained otherwise than by lawful means.[63]

لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُم بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَىٰ
كَالَّذِي يُنفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ

Make not your alms void by laying obligations upon those whom you have relieved or by injuring them (i.e., do not remind them of the good you did them, nor injure them in any way; for if you do so, your goodnesss will be of no effect); nor spend your substance to be seen of other men.[64]

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[63] *Al-Baqara*, Verse 268.
[64] *Al-Baqara*, Verse 265.

وَأَحْسِنُوْا إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Do good to the creatures of God, for God loves those who do good.[65]

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُوْنَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُوْرًا
عَيْنًا يَّشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللّٰهِ يُفَجِّرُوْنَهَا تَفْجِيْرًا
يُوْفُوْنَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُوْنَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهٗ مُسْتَطِيْرًا
وَيُطْعِمُوْنَ الطَّعَامَ عَلٰى حُبِّهٖ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّيَتِيْمًا
وَّأَسِيْرًا إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللّٰهِ لَا نُرِيْدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَآءً
وَّلَا شُكُوْرًا

Verily those who do deeds of real goodness shall drink of a cup tempered with *Kāfur* (camphor) i.e., the heartburnings, the poignant regrets and the impure desires of this world shall be washed away from their hearts.[66]

The word *Kafur*, i.e., camphor, is derived from *Kafr*, meaning to suppress and to cover, and therefore by the quaffing of camphor drink is here meant that their unlawful passions shall be suppressed, their hearts shall be cleansed of every impurity, and that they shall be refrigerated with the coolness of the deep knowledge of God. The verse then goes on to say :

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُوْنَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُوْرًا
عَيْنًا يَّشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللّٰهِ يُفَجِّرُوْنَهَا تَفْجِيْرًا

The servants of God i.e., those who do good, shall drink on the Day of Judgment of a spring which they are making to gush forth with their own hands here.[67]

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[65] ***Al-Baqara***, Verse 196.
[66] ***Al-Dahr***, Verses 6-10.
[67] ***Al-Dahr***, Verses 6-7.

This verse throws light upon the secret which underlies the true philosophy of Paradise. Let him, who will, attend to it.

And further :

وَ يُطْعِمُوْنَ الطَّعَامَ عَلٰى حُبِّهٖ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّ يَتِيْمًا
وَّ اَسِيْرًا اِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللّٰهِ لَا نُرِيْدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَآءً
وَّلَا شُكُوْرًا

> Who on account of their love for God, bestow their food on the poor and the orphan and the bondsman, though longing for it themselves, and who say : We do not confer any obligation upon you ; our only desire is that God may be pleased with us ; we do it only for the sake of His face. This is a service for which we seek from you neither recompense nor thanks.[68]

This verse commends the third stage of doing good, which proceeds out of sincere sympathy and seeks no reward, not even an acknowledgment of the bounty conferred.

وَاٰتَى الْمَالَ عَلٰى حُبِّهٖ ذَوِى الْقُرْبٰى وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَ
الْمَسٰكِيْنَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيْلِ وَالسَّآئِلِيْنَ وَفِى الرِّقَابِ

> The truly righteous are those who, in order to please God, assist their kindred out of their wealth and support orphans and take care of the needy, give to the way-farer and to those who ask, and spend also in ransoming and in discharging the debts of those who cannot pay.[69]

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[68] *Al-Dahr,* Verses 9-10.
[69] *Al-Baqara,* Verse 178.

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ
بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ قَوَامًا

And when they spend, they are neither lavish nor niggardly and keep the mean.[70]

وَالَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ
وَيَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَيَخَافُونَ سُوءَ الْحِسَابِ

And who join together what God has bidden to be joined and fear their Lord and dread the evil of the reckoning.[71]

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

And of whose property there is a due portion for those who ask and for those who are prevented from asking (including all the dumb animals).[72]

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ

Who give alms not only in prosperity but spend also so far as they can, even in adversity.[73]

وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً

And who give alms in secret and openly. (They give in secret so that there may be no show and openly in order to induce others to do the same).[74]

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[70] *Al-Furqān,* Verse 68.
[71] *Al-Ra'd,* Verse 22.
[72] *Al-Zāriyāt,* Verse 20.
[73] *Al-Imrān,* Verse 135.
[74] *Al-Ra'd,* Verse 23.

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ
عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ
وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ
اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

Income from alms should be spent in support of the poor and the needy, and to remunerate the services of those who are appointed as collectors or distributors, and to save those who are likely to be led into the trap of evil, and for the redemption of the captives, and to relieve those who are in debt or are insolvent or are implicated in other troubles, and in other ways which are solely for God's cause, and to assist the wayfarer. This is an ordinance from God and God is Knowing, Wise.[75]

لَن تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّىٰ تُنفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ

You shall by no means attain to goodness till you expend in the cause of your fellow-beings out of that which you love.[76]

وَآتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ
وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا

And give your kindred what they require in time of need and also to the poor and the traveller but waste not your substance wastefully.[77]

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[75] *Tauba,* Verse 60.
[76] *Al-Imrān,* Verse 93.
[77] *Bani Isrā'il,* Verse 27.

This verse forbids prodigality and the squandering away of wealth in luxury or, for instance, on the occasions of marriages and births, or in the observance of other customs.

بِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ
وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ
وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ
أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا
فَخُورًا الَّذِينَ يَبْخَلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ
بِالْبُخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ

Show kindness to your parents, and to kindred and to orphans, and to the poor and to neighbours who are your kinsmen, and to neighbours that are strangers, and to your familiar companions, and to the way-farer; and to whatever your right hand possesses (be they your slaves or servants or horses or other domestic animals), for this is what God loves, and He does not love the vain boasters and the selfish and does not like those who are niggardly themselves and bid others to be niggardly, and hide away that which God of His bounty has given them, saying to the poor and needy "we have not got anything".[78]

Courage

The fifth virtue, which proceeds from the instinct of bravery, is *Shajāat*, or courage. A child, when it has no reason, displays bravery and is ready to thrust its hands into the fire, for, having no knowledge of the consequences, the instinctive quality is predomi-

[78]*Al-Nisā*, Verses 37-38.

nant in it. Man in a similar condition, fearlessly rushes forth even to fight lions and other wild beasts and takes a stand alone against whole armies. People are apt to think that this is the highest courage but the fact is that it is more a mechanical reaction than a moral quality. Dogs and wild beasts are on an equality with him at this level. The virtue which we call *Shajāat*, or courage, can be displayed only after due reasoning and reflection and after full consideration of the propriety or the impropriety of the act. It is a quality which can be classed as an exalted virtue when it is displayed on the right occasion. The Holy Quran contains the following directions upon this point :

وَالصّٰبِرِيْنَ فِي الْبَاْسَآءِ وَالضَّرَّآءِ وَحِيْنَ الْبَاْسِ

> The truly brave are those who lose not their heart but stand firmly and behave patiently under ills and hardships and during battle.[79]

وَالَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ

> Their patience in adversity and during battle is only for the sake of God and not to display their bravery.[80]

اَلَّذِيْنَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ اِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوْا
لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ اِيْمَانًا وَّقَالُوْا حَسْبُنَا اللّٰهُ
وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيْلُ

When they are threatened with the mustering of people against them and are told to fear the forces gathering to crush them, they are not dispirited thereby. On the other hand, it increases their faith and they say God is sufficient for us and He is an excellent Guardian.[81]

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[79] *Al-Baqara*, Verse 178.
[80] *Al-Ra'd*, Verse 23.
[81] *Al-Imrān*, Verse 174.

Their courage is not like the prowess of wild beasts, a mechanical reaction stimulated by passion and therefore flowing in one direction only. They utilize their courage in two ways. Through it they resist and overcome the passions of the flesh and again resist the attacks of an evil-doer when it is advisable to do so, not in obedience to brute force but in the cause of truth. They do not, moreover, trust their own selves but have their confidence in the support of God at the time of trials.

Again:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ
بَطَرًا وَرِئَاءَ النَّاسِ

> Be not like those who marched forth from their homes in an insolent manner and to be seen of other people.[82]

The truly courageous do not display their bravery in an insolent manner and to be seen of other men. Their only consideration is the pleasure of God. All this leads to the conclusion that true courage is rooted in patience and steadfastness. The courageous man resists his passion and does not fly from danger like a coward but before he takes any step he looks to the remote consequences of his action. Between the daring dash of a savage and the indomitable courage of a civilized man, there is this vast difference that the latter is ready to meet real dangers but he reasons and reflects, even in the fury and tumult of battle, before he proceeds and takes the course best suited to avert the evil, while the former, in obedience to an irresistible passion, makes a violent onset in one direction only.

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[82] *Anfāl*, Verse 48.

Veracity

The sixth virtue, which is developed out of natural conditions, is veracity. So long as there is no incentive to tell a lie, man is naturally inclined to speak the truth. He is averse to lying from his very nature and hates the person who is proved to have told a plain lie. But this natural condition cannot claim our respect as one of the noble moral qualities. Unless a man is purged of the low motives which interpose themselves between him and truth, his veracity is questionable. For, if he speaks the truth only in matters in which truth does no harm to himself and tells a lie or holds his tongue from the utterance of truth when his life or property or honour is at stake, he can claim no superiority over children and madmen. In fact, no one speaks untruth without a motive, and there is no virtue in resorting to truth so long as there is no apprehension of harm. The test of truth is the occasion when one's life or honour or property is in danger. The Holy Quran contains the following injunctions upon this point :

فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا
قَوْلَ الزُّورِ

> Shun ye the pollution of idols and shun ye the word of falsehood. (The shunning of idols and falsehood is enjoined in the same breath to indicate that falsehood is an idol. The person who trusts to it does not trust in God, for he bows in submission to an idol).[83]

وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا

> The witnesses shall not refuse to present themselves whenever they are summoned.[84]

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[83]*Al-Hajj,* Verse 31.
[84]*Al-Baqara,* Verse 283.

وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَن يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ
آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُ

And conceal not true testimony, for he who conceals it has surely a wicked heart.[85]

وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ

And when you speak a word or pronounce a judgment, be true and just, though the person concerned be your kinsman.[86]

كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ
أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ

Hold fast to truth and justice and let your testimony be only for the sake of God, and speak not falsely, although the declaration of truth might injure yourselves, or your parents, or your kindred (such as children, etc.).[87]

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَآنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا

And let not hatred towards any induce you not to act uprightly.[88]

وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ

The men of truth and the women of truth shall find a rich reward.[89]

وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

They enjoin truth and steadfastness upon each other.[90]

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[85]*Al-Baqara,* Verse 284.
[86]*Al-An'ām,* Verse 153.
[87]*Al-Nisā,* Verse 136.
[88]*Al-Mā'ida,* Verse 9.
[89]*Al-Ahzāb,* Verse 36.
[90]*Al-Asr,* Verse 4.

لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّوْرَ

They do not sit in the company of liars.[91]

Patience

Another virtue which develops out of the natural conditions of man is *Sabr* or patience. Every one has more or less to suffer misfortunes, illness, and afflictions which are the common lot of humanity. Everyone, too, has, after much sorrowing and suffering, to make his peace with the misfortunes that befall him. But such contentment is by no means a noble moral quality. It is a natural consequence of the continuance of affliction that weariness at last brings about conciliation. The first shock causes depression of spirits and inquietude and elicits wails of woe, but when the initial excitement is over there is necessarily a reaction, for the extreme has been reached. But such disappointment and contentment are both the result of natural inclinations. It is only when the loss is received with total resignation to the will of God and in complete submission to His pleasure that the sufferer deserves to be called virtuous. The word of God thus deals with the noble quality of patience :

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوْعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ
الْأَمْوَالِ وَ الْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرٰتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ
الَّذِيْنَ إِذَآ أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُّصِيْبَةٌ قَالُوْٓا إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ
وَإِنَّآ إِلَيْهِ رٰجِعُوْنَ أُولٰٓئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوٰتٌ
مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَ رَحْمَةٌ وَأُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُوْنَ

We will surely prove you by afflicting you in some measure with fear and hunger, and decrease of wealth, and loss of lives, and

[91]*Al-Furqān*, Verse 73.

making failure to attend upon your efforts or bringing death upon your offspring ; but bear good tidings to the patient who, when a misfortune befalls them say, "we are God's creatures and His charges and must return to the Owner of the charge." Upon them shall be blessings from their Lord and mercy and they are the rightly guided.[92]

In short, it is owing to the quality of patience that a man declares himself satisfied with God's pleasure. In another sense it is also justice ; for when God has made numerous provisions in accordance with the pleasure of man and does, on so many occasions in his life, bring about things as he desires and has provided him with numerous blessings, it would be highly unjust if a man should grumble because Almighty God wills a thing in another way, and should not take the good that God provides with cheerfulness but turn aside from His path.

Sympathy

Another quality falling under the same category is sympathetic zeal. People of every nationality and religion are naturally endowed with the feeling of national sympathy, and in their zeal for the interests of their countrymen or co-religionists throw scruples to the winds and do not hesitate to wrong others. Such sympathetic zeal, however, does not proceed out of moral feelings but is an instinctive passion, and is witnessed even in the lower animals, especially ravens in whose case the call of one brings together thousands of them. To be classed as a moral quality, it must be displayed in accordance with the principles of justice and equity and on the proper occasion. It is to express this condition that the Arabic word *Muwāsāt*, meaning sympathy, is used. The injunctions of the Holy Quran upon this point are as follows:

[92] *Al-Baqara,* Verses 156-158.

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوٰى وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا
عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ

Sympathy and assistance for your people must be shown in deeds of goodness and piety, but you should not aid one another in evil and malice.[93]

وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ

And slacken not in your zeal for promoting the good of your people.[94]

وَلَا تَكُنْ لِلْخَائِنِينَ خَصِيمًا

And be not an advocate for the fraudulent.[95]

وَلَا تُجَادِلْ عَنِ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ إِنَّ
اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ خَوَّانًا أَثِيمًا

And plead not for those who defraud one another, verily God loves not him who is deceitful and a doer of evil.[96]

Search After an Almighty Being

Of the innate feeling of man, which we see implanted in his very nature, is a search after an Almighty Being to Whom he is drawn by a hidden magnetic power acting upon his soul. Its first manifestation takes place with the birth of the child. As soon as the child is born it is led by an instinctive desire to incline to its mother, and, corresponding to

93*Al-Mā'ida*, Verse 3.
94*Al-Nisā*, Verse 105.
95*Al-Nisā*, Verse 106.
96*Al-Nisā*, Verse 108.

the maternal instinct of love, it shows an instinctive impulse of attachment to its mother. With its growth and the development of its faculties, this instinct is displayed more prominently. It finds no rest but in the lap of its mother and no peace but in her tender caresses. Separation from her embitters all its pleasures and no blessing, however great, can atone for the pain caused to it by her loss. It has no consciousness but is impelled by instinct to love its mother and finds no quiet and repose but in her bosom alone.

The attraction which thus draws the child towards its parent points to the secret magnetism implanted by nature in the soul of man which draws him to his Creator, the true object of adoration. It is this same attraction again, which excites the affections of man to tend towards, and find their rest in, some external object. Thus we find the principle of attraction towards God implanted within us and instinctively impressed upon our hearts. The emotions of love, however different the objects which call them forth, are all to be traced to the instinct of "love for the Creator". In fixing his affections upon other objects, man seems only to be searching for the real object. He has, as it were, lost something of which he has now forgotten the name and seems to be seeking for it in every other object that he encounters. The attraction of wealth, the charms of beauty and the fascination of sweet and enchanting voices are only so many indications of some greater power underlying all those which draws all hearts towards it. But as imperfect human reason cannot comprehend nor the material eye discover this mysterious Being Who, hidden, like heat, in every soul is invisible to all, a true knowledge of His existence has been attended with the greatest difficulties and blunders have been made concerning His Being. Superstition and gross credulity have accorded the homage due to Invisible God to frail creatures and material objects.

This has been beautifully illustrated by the Holy Quran in a simile where the world is likened to a crystal palace paved with bright glass. Under this transparent floor a strong current of water is flowing. A superficial eye that witnesses the scene mistakes the glass for the water, being unable to attain to the reality, and discover the truth. That through which the water is seen is wrongly apprehended as water itself. The same is the case with the great heavenly bodies which we see in the universe, such as the sun, the moon, and the stars, which only reveal the existence of the Almighty Being, Who manifests Himself through them all. But faulty human judgment makes man bow his head in worship before them under the same delusion as affects the eye when it mistakes transparent glass for water. The Being that manifests Himself through these bodies is quite different from the bodies themselves The polytheist foolishly attributes that which is done by the great Power to the material objects through which that Power is manifested. This is the interpretation of the verse :

إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُمَرَّدٌ مِنْ قَوَارِيرَ

> This is (not water which thou fearest but) a palace floored with smooth glass.[97]

Revelation, the Mighty Proof of God's Existence

In short, God, though He reveals Himself manifestly, is invisible and hidden. The material universe cannot lead us to an irrefutable conclusion—to absolute certainty regarding the existence of its Author. The consummate order and perfect arrangement which the eye discovers in the universe comprising countless heavenly bodies and the numerous wonders which are disclosed to a thinking mind in nature have never lead and can never lead, to the firm conviction,

[97] *Al-Naml*, Verse 45.

to the perfect certainty that there truly exists a God, the Creator and the Lord of the universe, Whose power and knowledge extend over every atom of it. The greatest astronomers and philosophers who have applied their minds and energies solely to those sciences, have been involved in fatal doubts and scepticism as to the existence of God. All their knowledge, if it ever led them to draw the conclusion of the existence of God, could not go further than set it down among the probabilities.

The creation of the sun, the moon, and the stars, the order and design witnessed in those orbs which constitute the host of heaven, the consummate laws of order that regulate the universe, the formation of man's body and mind, the marvellous power and wisdom discernible in the government of this universe, no doubt lead all to the conclusion of the probability of the existence of a Creator, but probability does not prove actual existence. There is a vast difference between a probability and a certainty. Unless there is firm persuasion and strong conviction that God actually exists, the darkness of doubt cannot be dispelled and true light cannot enter the heart. The rational persuasion following from observation of a plan in the universe does not amount to certainty and cannot lead to peace and contentment of mind. It is not the wholesome cup of elixir which has the power to wash off every doubt and quench the thirst which the soul of man naturally feels for a true and perfect knowledge of God. The imperfect knowledge, which is the result of a study of nature, is fraught with danger, for there is in it more argument than substantial reality.

In short, unless Almighty God reveals Himself by His word spoken to His servants, as He reveals Himself by His works as witnessed in nature, a rational persuasion of His existence, which is the outcome of an observation of His work, is never satisfactory. If, for instance, the doors of a room are all latched

from the inside, the natural inference is that there is someone in the room who has bolted the doors. But if years pass and no sound is heard from within, no voice responds to the repeated cries of the outsiders, year after year, we would have to change our opinion as to the presence of someone within, and would be compelled to ascribe the event to some incomprehensible circumstance. Such is the belief in the existence of God, which is based merely upon a study of nature. The whole inquiry brings us but to the extremely disappointing conclusion that the chances are in favour of the existence of a God who created the universe.

The fact is that an inquiry relating to the existence of God cannot be complete so long as we consider only one side of the question, viz., the work of God. The effort is misdirected which sets before itself the object of discovering the Creator simply from under heaps of matter. It is a blasphemy against the glorious and living God that in the midst of all His creation, He should be likened to a dead body which can only be discovered by digging it out from under heaps of rubbish. That God, with all His infinite wisdom and Almighty power should depend upon human effort to be revealed to the world, is a revolting idea. God, viewed in this light, cannot be the centre of our hopes and our Supporter in all our infirmities. Does God Himself reveal His face to His creatures or are they to seek a clue to His existence for themselves? Does He show us His presence or are we to search for Him? The Eternal and Invisible God has eternally made Himself known by His own clear and blessed voice proclaiming "I am"; and has ever thus invited His frail creatures towards Himself that they may seek their support in Him. It is presumptuous to assert that God lies under an obligation to man because the latter takes the trouble to discover Him and that, but for man's exertions He, the Eternal and Immortal King of the universe, would never have been known to His creation.

God Speaks Now as He Spoke in the Past

To object to the palpable and conclusive proof of the real existence of God as furnished by His voice on the ground that He must needs then have a tongue, an idea inconsistent with the existence of a spirit such as God is childish. Has He not created the earth and the countless host of heaven without any material hands? Does He, the All-seeing, not see the whole universe without any material eyes? Does He not hear the voice of His humblest servant and yet He has not ears like ours? Is it not necessary, then, that He should speak as He creates, sees and hears? To object to the manifestation of one Divine attribute while admitting others is absurd.

To say that though God spoke to generations of men in the past and made Himself known to them by His own clear voice, yet He does not speak now would be to assert something wholly untenable. The unchangeable God who spoke to His chosen servants in the past speaks to them even now and blesses with His Holy Word such as His servants as seek Him with all their heart and all their soul. The chosen ones of God even now drink deep at the fountain of His revelation. No one dare set a seal upon the lips of God. His Grace even now flows in abundance and is bestowed upon men as it was bestowed of old. It is true that the revelation of a perfect Law and rules for the guidance of mankind has obviated the need of a fresh revealed Law and apostleship and prophecy have attained their perfection in the holy person of our lord and master, the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him); but access to the sacred fountain of revelation is not thereby barred.

That the Divine Light should have shone from Arabia last of all had been pre-destined by Divine wisdom. The purpose behind this is easy to discover. The Arabs are descended from Ishmael whom Divine wisdom had cast forth into the wilderness of Paran.

Thus God cut off all connection between his race and the seed of Israel. Paran (Arabic *Faran*) means the "two fugitives". It was destined that those whom Abraham had cast off from himself should have no share in the Law of Israel, as it has been said that Ishmael "shall not be heir" with Isaac. The Ishmaelites were, therefore, isolated from those who were their next of kin and had no relations with any other people. In all other countries we meet with traces of laws and doctrines preached by some prophet, a fact clearly indicating that those nations had at one time or other received their teachings from God but Arabia does not appear to have received any such teaching. So far as the influence of the prophets is concerned, the Ishmaelites were the most backward people. This act of a wise Providence could not be without purpose. Why were the Ismaelites kept aloof from the whole world and cut off from the prophecy of Israel? The conclusion is irresistible.

Arabia was destined to be the final scene of prophetic law-giving and the mission of its Prophet was destined to be universal. He came last of all and, therefore, he came for all, so that he might bless all the nations of the earth and denounce the errors of every people. The transcendent knowledge which he gave to the world is perfect in every respect. The heavenly law revealed through him aims at the complete reformation of man without any distinction of creed or colour. Its injunctions are by no means for a single community like those of the earlier books. It deals fully with all the stages of reformation needed in the case of any people. It furnishes a universal code and contains all the necessary guiding rules for the civilizing of all men. To root out a few vices from among a particular community had been the object and aim of all previous scriptures, but the Holy Quran sets before itself the grand and all-embracing object of furnishing a true remedy for all kinds of evil and gives directions for the guidance of all men. More-

over it describes all the steps necessary for the social, moral, and spiritual development of man. It had first to contend with savageness and raise men to the dignity of social beings by inculcating the social virtues. The next step was to expound the higher moral doctrines.

The credit of pointing out the true distinction between natural inclinations and moral qualities is also due to the Holy Quran. But it does not stop with the teaching of oxcellent morals. It aims to raise men a step higher to the perfection of humanity. It not only opens the door to the holy knowledge of God, to the certainty regarding His existence, but also raises men to spiritual excellence. It has enlightened millions of men regarding the true knowledge of God and established them upon a firm basis with respect to the certainty of His existence. It gives admirable directions regarding the threefold advancement of man which we have discussed above.

As the Holy Quran is a comprehensive code of teachings and guidance regarding the perfection of man, it sets forth that claim quite clearly. Thus it says:

اَلْيَوْمَ اَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِيْنَكُمْ وَ اَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ
نِعْمَتِيْ وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْاِسْلَامَ دِيْنًا

> This day have I perfected your faith for you and have completed my favours and blessings unto you, and I have chosen Islam as your religion.[98]

This verse lays down in clear and emphatic terms that religion attains its perfection in Islam. In other words, upon reaching a stage in which, as signified by the word Islam, a person completely resigns himself to the Will of God, he seeks salvation by the sacrifice of his own self (i.e., his interests and

[98] *Al-Mā'ida,* Verse 4.

desires) and not by anyother method, and does not allow this sacrifice to remain a mere matter of theory but demonstrates it in his deeds and practice. It is to this that the word "Islam" calls attention. All excellences culminate in this point.

Five Proofs of the Existence of God

The philosophers who trusted to their imperfect reason could not discover the true God. A true knowledge of His existence was vouchsafed by the Holy Quran, the revealed word of God. The Holy Word suggests two methods of attaining to this knowledge. First, it teaches the course by adopting which human reason is strengthened and sharpened in deducing existence of God from the laws of nature and is protected from falling into error. Secondly, it points out the spiritual method which we shall discuss hereafter in answer to the third question.

Under the first heading it has adduced clear and cogent arguments appealing to human reason in support of the existence of God. Thus it says :

رَبُّنَا الَّذِیْۤ اَعْطٰی کُلَّ شَیْءٍ خَلْقَهٗ ثُمَّ هَدٰی

> Our Lord is He Who has bestowed upon everything a creation suitable to its nature and then directed it to attain its desired perfection.[99]

Now, if we look to the nature of all creatures from man downward, and consider their constitutions and moulds, we shall find the creation of all things wonderfully adapted to their natures. To enter into any details upon this point would be trying the patience of the audience. Everyone can easily pursue this line of thought for himself.

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[99] *Tā Hā*, Verse 51.

Another argument in support of the existence of the Divine Being is deduced by the Holy Quran from His being the cause of causes or the First cause. Thus it says :

وَاَنَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهٰى

> And the whole system of cause and effect ends with the Lord.[100]

This Argument is based upon the natural order of cause and effect which pervades the universe. The growth of knowledge and science is made possible by the universal dominion of this order over every part of the world. Fundamental laws and principles have been deduced from it. Every cause, which is not itself primary, is traceable to some other cause and this to another and so on. But as the series of cause and effect, taking its rise in this finite world of ours, cannot be indefinite, it must terminate at some point. The final cause is, therefore, the Author of the Universe. It is to this final or first cause that the verse quoted above calls attention.

Another argument supporting the existence of the Divine Being is thus described by the Holy Quran :

لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْۢبَغِيْ لَهَاۤ اَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا الَّيْلُ سَابِقُ
النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِيْ فَلَكٍ يَّسْبَحُوْنَ

> The sun cannot overtake the moon, nor can the night (which is ruled by the moon) outstrip the day (which is ruled by the sun) ; and all the luminaries move in their respective orbits.[101]

Had all these heavenly systems no designer they would soon have been disorganized and destroyed. The vast masses of matter rolling in space without interference with each other demonstrate by the reg-

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100 *Al-Najam*, Verse 42.
101 *Yāsīn*, Verse 41.

ularity of their motions contrivance and design hence the designer. Is it not surprising that these innumerable spheres thus rolling on from time immemorial do neither collide, nor alter their courses in the slightest degree, nor are subject to waste or decay from their constant motion? How could such a grand organization work on without any disorder or confusion for numberless years unless it were in accordance with the design and contrivance of a Supreme Contriver? Alluding to this consummate Divine Wisdom Almighty God says elsewhere in the Holy Quran:

أَفِي اللّٰهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

> Is there any doubt concerning God Who has made such wonderful heavenly bodies and such a wonderful earth?[102]

Another argument relating to the existence of a Creator is thus put forth by the Holy Quran:

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ وَّ يَبْقٰى وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ
ذُو الْجَلٰلِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

> All things pass away and what abideth for ever is the face of thy Supporter, the Lord of Majesty and Glory.[103]

Now if we suppose the earth reduced to nothing and the heavenly bodies all brought to naught and the whole material universe made non-existent, still reason and conscience require that something should remain which should never die nor be ever subject to change or decay. Such a Being is God Who brought everything into existence from nothing.

In another place, the Holy Quran adduces the following argument in support of the existence of God:

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[102] *Ibrahim*, Verse 11.
[103] *Al-Rahmān*, Verses 27-28.

أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ

> When the Lord God said to the souls: "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yea, we do bear witness".[104]

In this verse Almighty God relates in the form of a dialogue a characteristic of the soul which He has implanted in its nature, viz., that it is not in the nature of the soul to deny the existence of God. The atheist rejects the existence of the Divine Being, not because his nature revolts against it but because he thinks that he has no proof of His existence. Notwithstanding this denial, he would admit that every effect has a corresponding cause. No sane person holds that a certain disease, for instance, is not attributable to any cause. A rejection of the system of cause and effect overthrows all principles and all sciences. All manner of calculations which determine the times of eclipses, storms, earthquakes, etc., and all other inferences, would become impossible if every effect were not due to a particular cause. A philosopher, therefore, though denying the existence of a Divine Being cannot dispute the existence of the first cause, as he cannot reject the whole system of the universe. Besides, if a person who denies the existence of God were reduced to a state in which he could be purged of all desires and motives, he would, in this stage, admit the existence of God as experience has so often proved. The verse above quoted thus tells us that a denial of the existence of God is persisted in only so long as the lower desires and motives of man have the upper hand and that pure nature is strongly impressed with the fact of the existence of a Divine Being.

[104] *Al-A'rāf*, Verse 173.

The Attributes of God

The above are only a few of the numerous arguments in support of the existence of God, which the Holy Quran has mentioned. We shall next consider the attributes of the Almighty Being as taught by the Holy Word of God. The following are only a few examples of the treatment of this subject in the Holy Quran :

هُوَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ
وَ الشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمٰنُ الرَّحِيْمُ

He is God beside Whom there is none who is worthy of being worshipped and obeyed.[105]

The idea of a partner with God is negatived because if God had a rival, His Divinity would be liable at some time to pass wholly to His rival. Further, the words, "there is none who is worthy of being worshipped but He", signify that He is a perfect God Whose attributes, beauties, and excellences are so high and exalted that if we were to select a God from among other beings whose selection depended upon the perfection of his attributes, or if we were to suppose certain qualities as the highest and most excellent attributes of God, nothing would approach Him in His perfection and in the excellence of His attributes. Injustice, therefore, could go no further than to set up a partner or a rival with such a Being.

His next attribute, mentioned in the verse above, is that He is "the Knower of His Own person". In other words, no one can comprehend His person with limited human faculties. We can comprehend everything that has been created ; for instance, the sun, the moon, etc., in its entirety, but we cannot comprehend God in His entirety. The verse then goes on to say that "He knows everything, and nothing lies hid-

[105] *Al-Hashr*, Verse 23.

den from Him". It would be inconsistent with His Divinity that He should be ignorant of His Own creation. He looks to every small particle of the universe but man cannot do this. God knows when He shall put an end to this system and bring a general destruction over all things but no one else knows this. God alone is He Who knows the time of the happenings of all things.

Then, "God is He Who provides, out of His bountiful mercy, and not in return for anything done by the creatures all the means of happiness and perfection for all living beings before their creation." We see the manifestation of this attribute in God's creation of the sun, the moon, and numerous other things for the benefit of men before they or their deeds ever came into being. This gift of the Divine Being is due to His attribute *Rahmāniyyat*, or mercy, and it is when this attribute is at work that He is called *Al-Rahmān*, or Merciful. With respect to another attribute of God He is called *Al-Rahim*, "He Who bestows a good reward for the good deeds of His creatures and does not waste anyone's effort". Thus displayed His mercy is called *Rahimiyyat* and the Merciful God Himself, *Al-Rahim*.

Again God is described as "the Lord of the day of judgment." In other words, He Himself judges the whole world. He has not made over the dominion of earth and heavens to anybody else so as to sever His connection with His creatures, nor has He entrusted the business of judgment to any other being, so as to invest him with the sole authority to judge the world.

God is also "the King Who is without a fault or deficiency, or blemish." The Kingdom of God is not like earthly kingdoms which may pass into other hands or come to an end of themselves. The subjects may all emigrate to another country and thus leave an earthly ruler without anything to rule over. A severe and widespread famine may reduce a ruler to something less than a beggar. If the subjects as a

body rise against a monarch and contest his authority to rule over them, he may be compelled to abdicate. Such is not, however, the Kingdom of God. He has the power to destroy the whole creation and bring new creatures into existence. Had He not been Omnipotent He would have been obliged to have recourse to injustice in His dealings with His creatures. For instance, the salvation of the whole of His first creation would have necessitated the injustice of sending them back to this world to be tried again. If God had no power to create new souls, the world would either have been left without any souls or the Almighty would have been obliged to revoke the salvation which He had first granted. Either of these courses would not have been consistent with Divine perfection and, if adopted, would have placed the Divine Being on a level with imperfect earthly rulers. The laws which governments make for the administration of their affairs are always defective. When they are compelled to have recourse to measures of oppression and injustice, they look upon them as being justified by considerations of justice and equity. Temporal Governments, for instance, deem it excusable that a boat should sink with its crew and passengers when it is likely to collide with a ship and thus liable to cause greater loss of life and property. But it is not consistent with Divinity that God should be driven to an extremity in which the adoption of one of two defective courses should become inevitable. If He had not the power to create from nothing, we could only liken Him to the ruler of a petty state who must either use oppression to keep up His Divinity or, being just, be left without a world to rule over. But Almighty God is free from every such defect and the mighty vessel of His power floats upon the ocean of justice and equity.

The next attribute of the Divine Being mentioned in the verse is *Al-Salām*, i.e., He is the God of peace Who is Himself immune from every defect, adversity,

and hardship, and provides safety and security for others. The significance of this attribute is evident for if He Himself had been a prey to suffering and adversity, persecuted and beaten by men, or unable to carry out His Own designs, no heart would ever have looked up to Him in trials and afflictions with the hope of deliverance. Thus, He says of false deities :

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا
ذُبَابًا وَّلَوِ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهٗ وَإِنْ يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ
شَيْئًا لَّا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَ
الْمَطْلُوبُ مَا قَدَرُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهٖ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَقَوِيٌّ
عَزِيزٌ

Verily they on whom you call beside God could by no means create a fly though they were all assembled for that purpose ; nay, were a fly to carry aught from them, they could not take it away from it. Weak of understanding are the worshippers of these false deities and the worshipped ones themselves are destitute of all power. (Such weak things cannot be deities), but the true Deity is God, Who is more powerful than every powerful being, and the Mighty One Who overcomes everything, Who can neither be seized nor beaten by human beings (such people who invoke the false deities are in error) ; they have not formed a worthy and true estimate of God, the object of their worship.[106]

Another attribute of God is *Al-Mu'min*, i.e., the Granter of security and the Establisher of reasons in support of His Own unity and excellence. This attribute calls attention to the fact that a believer in the

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[106] *Al-Hajj*, Verses 74-75.

true God may consider himself safe on every occasion. He is not ashamed before people because he has strong and cogent arguments in support of his assertions, nor shall he be ashamed before God. But the worshipper of a false deity is always in trouble. Having no arguments in his favour, he takes every foolish assertion which is contrary to reason for a deep mystery so that under that name his absurdities and errors may pass for something transcending human reason.

The verse which has been partly quoted above, then goes on to say:

الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ

> Guardian over all, overcoming every power, Mender of every breakage and Restorer of every loss; and above every need.[107]

And again:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ

> He is God, the Maker of bodies, the Creator of souls, the Fashioner of the image in the womb, to Whom belong all excellent titles that man can imagine.[108]

يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

> The dwellers of the heavenly bodies declare His sanctity and holiness as well as the dwellers of the earth; and He is the Mighty, the Wise.[109]

This verse also indicates that there are dwellers in the heavenly bodies who follow Divine rules of guidance.

Again the Holy Quran describes God as:

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[107] *Al-Hashr*, Verse 24.
[108] *Al-Hashr*, Verse 25.
[109] *Al-Hashr*, Verse 25.

عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

His power extends over everything.[110]

This is the real source of comfort for the worshippers of the true God, for how could man centre all his hopes in Him if He Himself were weak? Elsewhere we also have:

رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ مٰلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ

The Nourisher of all the universes, the Merciful, the Gracious, the Lord of the day of Judgment.[111]

أُجِيْبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

Listening to supplications and answering them, i.e., the Acceptor of prayers.[112]

And again:

اَلْحَيُّ الْقَيُّوْمُ

The Ever-living and the Source of all life, the Supporter of all.[113]

God is here described as eternal and everlasting in order to exclude all notion of His death, thus leaving His worshippers without a master.

قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ اَللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ
يُوْلَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ

He is the One God without an equal. He neither begets nor is He begotten nor is there any other being of His kind.[114]

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[110]*Al-Baqara*, Verse 149.
[111]*Al-Fātiha*, Verse 2.
[112]*Al-Baqara*, Verse 187.
[113]*Al-Imrān*, Verse 3.
[114]*Al-Ikhlās*

It should be borne in mind that justice in relation to the Creator consists in being firmly established upon the true path of Divine Unity without deviating a hair's breadth from it. The moral injunctions to which I have here called attention form a part of the ethical teachings of the Holy Quran. The most conspicuous feature of all these teachings is complete freedom from excess and default. The Holy Quran does not characterize any quality as a moral quality unless it is exercised within its proper limits. It needs not to be demonstrated that virtue lies in the middle course.

In other words, it is a mean between two extremes. Whatever inclines a man to the middle path and establishes him in the mean course is conducive to good morals. The man who acts on the right occasion follows the mean path, which alone can lead to good. The farmer who scatters seed in his fields either too late or too early, departs, in so doing, from the middle path and the result is a waste of seed. Virtue, truth and wisdom all lie in the middle path and he alone can walk in that path who is vigilant for the opportunity. Between two false positions which occupy either extreme lies the middle course, the path of righteousness, which can be kept only by being watchful of the right occasion. As in other moral qualities, the middle path must be adhered to in the recognition of the existence of God. The mean in this consists in avoiding on the one hand, the view of God which divests the Divine Being of every attribute and in rejecting, on the other, the view which likens Him to things material. This is the position, which the Holy Quran has taken with regard to the attributes of the Divine Being. It recognizes Him as seeing, hearing, knowing, speaking, etc., but cautions us at the same time not to liken Him to anything which our senses can comprehend. Thus it says:

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ

No one participates with God in His person and attributes.[115]

فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلّٰهِ الْأَمْثَالَ

Do not liken Him to any one of His creatures.[116]

Being like to us in some of His actions, He is yet an immaculate Being. Such is the true conception of God. In short, Islam adopts the golden mean in all its teachings. The opening sura of the Holy Quran inculcates the adoption of the mean path when it teaches the well-known prayer:

اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيْمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوْبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّآلِّيْنَ

Guide us in the right path, the path of those upon whom have been Thy blessings not of those upon whom has been Thy wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.[117]

In this verse, three sorts of people have been mentioned. First of all, there are the *Maghdūb alaihim*, by which the Holy Quran means people who assume an attitude of anger towards God and thus following their own savage inclinations call down the wrath of God upon themselves. Then are the *Dālleen*, by which are meant people who are led astray by following their bestial inclinations and their delusions. Midway between these two extremes are the people who walk in the right (the middle) path and whom the Holy Quran denominates here in the verse. In fact to direct people in the middle path is the one object of the Holy Quran. Moses laid stress upon retaliation and Jesus upon forbearance, but the Holy Quran taught the use of both in their proper place. Elsewhere in the Holy Quran we have:

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[115] *Al-Shūrā*, Verse 12.
[116] *Al-Nahl*, Verse 75.
[117] *Al-Fātiha*, Verses 6-7.

وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنٰكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّسَطًا

> We have made you walk in the middle path and taught you the golden mean in all things.[118]

Blessed are they who adopt this course for as the Arabic proverb says, "The golden mean is the best."

Islamic Teachings on The Spiritual Conditions

We shall now consider the third stage of man's development, viz., his spiritual conditions. We have already stated in the beginning of this discourse that the source of the spiritual conditions is the *Nafs-i-Mutmainnah*, or the soul at rest, which takes a man onward in his moral progress and makes him godly; in other words, transports him from the moral to spiritual regions. Upon this topic the following verse has a plain bearing:

يٰۤاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِيْۤ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً
مَّرْضِيَّةً فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبٰدِيْ وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ

> O thou soul! that art at rest and restest fully contented with thy Lord, return unto Him, He being pleased with thee and thou with Him: so enter among My servants and enter into My Paradise.[119]

In discussing the spiritual conditions, it is necessary to comment upon this verse in some detail. It should be borne in mind that the highest spiritual condition to which man can aspire in this world is that he should rest contented with God and should find

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[118] *Al-Baqara*, Verse 144.
[119] *Al-Fajr*, Verses 28-31.

his rest, his happiness, and his delight in Him alone. This is the stage of life which we term the heavenly life.

The pure and perfect sincerity, truth and righteousness of a person are rewarded by Almighty God by granting him a heaven upon this earth. All others look to a prospective paradise but such a one enters paradise in this very life. It is at this stage, too, that a person realizes that the prayers and worship which at first appeared to him as a burden, are really the sustenance on which the growth of his soul depends and that this is the basis of his spiritual development. He then sees that the fruit of his efforts is not to be gathered in a future life only. The spirit, which, in the second stage, although admonishing a man for the impurities of life, was yet powerless to resist evil tendencies or to blot them out wholly and too infirm to establish a man upon the principles of virtue with firmness, now reaches a stage of development in which its efforts are crowned with success. The sensual passions die out of themselves and the soul no more stumbles but, strengthened with the spirit of God, is ashamed of its past failings. The state of struggle with evil propensities is left behind. An entire change passes over the nature of man and his former habits undergo a complete transformation. He is completely estranged from his former courses of life. He is washed of all impurities and perfectly cleansed. God Himself plants the love of virtue in his heart and purifies it of the defilement of evil with His Own Hand. The hosts of truth encamp in his heart and righteousness keeps guard over all its bastions. Truth is now victorious and falsehood lays down its arms and is reduced to subjection. The hand of God sways over his heart and he walks every step under its shelter. It is to this state of the quietude of mind in virtue that the following verses point:

أُولٰٓئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُمْ بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ

God has engraved faith on the hearts of the true believers with His Own Hand and strengthened them with the holy spirit.[120]

حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ
إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
الرَّاشِدُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللّٰهُ
عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

O believers, God has endeared the faith to you and impressed its beauties and excellences upon your hearts and has made unbelief and wickedness and disobedience hateful to you and has made your hearts averse to all evil courses. Such are the dealings of God with those who pursue the right course. All this is through grace and favour from God and God is Knowing, Wise.[121]

جَآءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ
زَهُوقًا

Truth came and falsehood has vanished away; for falsehood cannot stand against truth.[122]

Such are the words of the Holy Quran relating to the third stage of the advancement of the spirit. The person who has not realized this state is without true sight. We must mark the words that God "engraved faith on the hearts of the true believers with His Own

[120] *Al-Mujādilah*, Verse 23.
[121] *Hujurāt*, Verses 8-9.
[122] *Bani Isrā'il*, Verse 82.

Hand and strengthened them with the holy spirit." These words can bear no other signification than this that the attainment of true purity and righteousness is impossible except through Heavenly aid. In the second stage of the spirit, which we have termed the self-accusing spirit, there is a struggle between good and evil tendencies. A person feels the compunctions of his good nature for a time but evil propensities again get the upper hand. He is conscious of his fall and sometimes even despairs of reformation and of complete victory of his good nature over evil tendencies. When the period of his spiritual struggle is over, a light descends upon him accompanied with Divine strength. The descent of this light works a wonderful transformation in his soul and he feels a strong invisible hand leading him onwards, A new universe discloses itself to his sight and he then witnesses the existence of God. His eyes are illumined with a new light and things are revealed to him which he had hitherto been unable to see.

But how can we discover this path and how to acquire this light? No effect can be produced without a cause, no end is attained without adopting the means thereto and no knowledge is obtained without treading along the path leading to it. The laws of nature cannot be broken. The laws of nature testify that to achieve a result, there is a right course, and that its attainment is dependent upon the adoption of that particular course. If we are sitting in a dark room and need the light of the sun, the right thing for us to do is to open the window facing the sun. Then shall light enter the room and illumine all its corners. In like manner, there must be a door through which the blessings and favours of God can be received and a method by which the spiritual state can be attained. Therefore, it is our duty to seek this right road for our spiritual welfare as we are engaged day and night in search of means which are calculated to better our

physical and temporal state. But the question is whether that road can be discovered by the efforts of reason alone and whether we can successfully seek a union with God by the sole ingenuity of our own mind. Is it true that mere logic and philosophy may open for us the doors which experience tells us can only be opened by the powerful hand of God? No, mere human devices can never reveal to us the shining face of the Living and Sustaining God. Let him who would walk on the right path, completely submit himself with all his faculties and powers to the will of God, and then pray unceasingly and untiringly for the Divine union and thus realize the reality of Divine existence through Divine assistance.

The most excellent prayer in this respect put in appropriate words and adopted best to meet the requirements of human nature, drawing at the same time a faithful picture of the natural zeal of the soul, is that taught by the Holy Quran in its opening sura. It thus says:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله رب العلمين الرحمن الرحيم
ملك يوم الدين اياك نعبد واياك نستعين اهدنا
الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين انعمت عليهم غير المغضوب
عليهم ولا الضالين

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

All perfect praise is due to God, the Creator and the Supporter of all the universes.

The Merciful God Who out of His Mercy provides for our welfare before we have done aught to deserve it, the Merciful God Who rewards our deeds mercifully.

Sole judge of the day of judgment Who has not given to any one else His right to judge His creatures.

O Thou! to Whom all these praises are due, Thee alone do we worship, and of Thee alone do we seek assistance in all matters. (The use of the plural "we" in this verse indicates that all the faculties are engaged in Divine worship and working in complete submission to God, for man, considering with reference to his internal faculties, is regarded not as an individual but as a class. This total resignation of all faculties to the will of God is the true signification of the word Islam.)

Guide us, O Lord! into the right path which leads to Thee and let it be so that, remaining firm in that path, we may be guided to walk in the footsteps of those upon whom have been Thy blessings and favours.

Save us, O God! from the path of those upon whom has been Thy wrath and of those who, having fallen into error, have gone astray and not reached Thee.[123]

Be it so, O God!

The Recipients of Divine Blessings

It is clear from these verses that the blessings of God, i.e., His favours are bestowed upon persons who sacrifice their lives and all their interests in the path of God, make a complete submission to Him and resign themselves wholly to His will and then supplicate Him to grant them all the spiritual blessings to which man can attain of nearness and union with God, and of speaking to and being addressed by Him. They engage all their faculties in devotion to God, eschew every form of disobedience and prostrate themselves utterly before Him. They shun every evil course and scrupulously avoid occasions of the wrath of God. They seek God with true sincerity and exalted mag-

[123] *Al-Fātiha*

nanimity and their efforts are, therefore, crowned with success, and they are given to drink of the cup of knowledge of God.

These verses further refer to constancy in the path of God, thus indicating that the Divine blessings which bring about the spiritual state do not flow in their fullness until a person shows a firmness and a sincerity unshaken under the severest trials. He must attain to a union which cannot be cut asunder by a sword nor burned by fire : adversity cannot loosen the tie, the demise of the nearest of kin has not the slightest effect upon it, the separation of dear objects does not interfere with it, and the most fearful calamities do not shake it. Narrow is the door indeed and difficult the path ! Ah, what a mountain to ascend ! The following verse of the Holy Quran calls attention to this :

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ اٰبَاؤُكُمْ وَ اَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَاِخْوَانُكُمْ
وَاَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيْرَتُكُمْ وَاَمْوَالُ اِقْتَرَفْتُمُوْهَا
وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسٰكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَآ
اَحَبَّ اِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهٖ وَجِهَادٍ فِيْ
سَبِيْلِهٖ فَتَرَبَّصُوْا حَتّٰى يَأْتِيَ اللّٰهُ بِاَمْرِهٖ وَاللّٰهُ
لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ

Say to them : If your fathers and your sons and your brethren and your wives and your kindred and wealth which you have gained with labour and your trade which you fear may come to a standstill and your spacious dwellings which please you, be dearer to you than God and His Apostle and efforts in His path, then wait until God issues His behest ; and God shall never guide the transgressors.[124]

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124 *Tauba*, Verse 24.

It appears from this verse that those who love their wealth and kindred in preference to the will of God are transgressors in the sight of God. Their end is described as destruction for having given preference to other things over God.

This is the third stage of advancement and it is on reaching this stage that a person becomes godly provided he is willing to subject himself to every disgrace and affliction for the sake of God, and turns to Him with such exclusive devotion and sincerity as to regard all beside Him as dead. The truth is that it is impossible for us to see the Living God unless a death comes first over all our passions and desires. The day on which such death overtakes our earthly life is the day of the triumph of spirituality and the day of the revelation of the Divine Being. We are blind so long as we are not blind to all other sights, and we are lifeless so long as we are not lifeless under the hand of God. The uprightness which enables us to overcome all carnal passions is granted to us only when we are directly facing God. Uprightness deals a death blow to all carnal desires and it is to this state that the words, "Nay, whoever submits himself completely to Allah, and is the doer of good" call attention, requiring that we should bow down in complete submission to Him. This stage of uprightness is not attained until all the members of our body and all the faculties which sustain us begin to work in total submission to God and our very life and death have no other object but the pleasure of God. As is elsewhere said:

قُلْ اِنَّ صَلَاتِيْ وَنُسُكِيْ وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِيْ لِلّٰهِ
رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

Say my prayers and my sacrifices and my life and my death are all for the sake of God.[125]

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[125] *Al-Anʻām*, Verse 163.

When man's love for God becomes so great, when his life and death have no interest left for himself but are solely for the sake of God, then God Who loves those who love Him, causes His love to descend upon that person. From the union of these two loves bursts forth a light which cannot be perceived or realized by those who are bent low upon this earth. Thousands of the faithful and righteous have been murdered in cold blood by the worldly-minded because the world was blind to the light which had descended upon them. They were looked upon by the world as covetous and deceitful contrivers for it could not see their bright faces. The Holy Quran attests to this spiritual blindness of the worldly in the following words :

يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُوْنَ

The unbelievers look towards thee, yet they do not see thee.[126]

In short, an earthly person becomes a heavenly being when illumined by the heavenly light. The Author of all existence speaks with him and illumines him with the lustre of Divinity. His heart which overflows with the love of his Divine Master becomes God's habitation and the throne of His glory. From the moment that such a man is renewed, having undergone a pure transformation, God also becomes new to him, for His dealings and laws with him are changed. Not that God becomes new or His laws and dealings become new but that these laws and dealings are distinct from those displayed in connection with the mass of men, and are such as the worldly wise are not cognizant of. It is to such transformation that the following verse of the Holy Quran refers :

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّشْرِىْ نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِ
اللّٰهِ وَاللّٰهُ رَءُوْفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

[126] *Al-A'rāf*, Verse 199.

> And from among men are those (types of perfection who are lost in search of the pleasure of God) who sell their very selves in return for the pleasure of God: these are they on whom the mercy and blessings of God descend.[127]

Such is the case of the person who has attained the spiritual stage of perfection, viz., that he sacrifices himself in the path of God. In the verse quoted here, we are told that the mercy of God encompasses such a person and consequently he alone is delivered from all suffering and sin who spends himself in the path of God and Divine pleasure and with this sacrifice gives proof of his exclusive devotion to God. He regards himself as having been created for no other purpose but obedience to God and sympathy for His creatures. When he has thus submitted his will and intention to the Will of God, every faculty is engaged in the performance of pure virtue, not formally or coldly but with sincere interest, zeal and pleasure as if actually seeing his Master in the mirror of his obedience and submission. The will of God becomes his will and he has no delight but in obedience to Him. He does not perform good or virtuous deeds simply on account of their goodness but his very nature is drawn in that direction and he finds his highest pleasure and bliss in them.

Heaven Upon Earth

This is the paradise upon earth which is granted to the spiritual man, and the promised heaven in the next world is only an image of the present paradise, being an embodiment of the spiritual blessings which such a man enjoys here in this life. Referring to this, Almighty God says:

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّتٰنِ

127*Al-Baqara,* Verse 208.

And for him who fears his Lord and stands in awe of His majesty and glory there shall be two paradises ; one in this world and the other in the life to come.[128]

وَسَقٰهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُوْرًا

To those who are lost in the contemplation of Divine glory their Lord has given a drink which has purified their hearts, their ideas, and their motives.[129]

اِنَّ الْاَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُوْنَ مِنْ كَاْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُوْرًا
عَيْنًا يَّشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللّٰهِ يُفَجِّرُوْنَهَا تَفْجِيْرًا

The just are quaffing a drink tempered with camphor *Kāfur;* they are drinking of a fountain which they have made to gush forth with their own hands.[130]

The word *Kāfur*, used in connection with the state of the just, is derived, as already indicated, from *Kafr* meaning to cover and to suppress, and refers to the total extinction of worldly love and the complete suppression of all worldly desires of those who have drunk of the cup of the love of God and severance of all other connections with true sincerity. It is plain that passions take their growth in the heart, and if the heart is removed away from impurities, the passions gradually subside and ultimately die out. The more a man leans towards God, the farther off he is from the control of carnal passions, and therefore, the righteous, who trust to God alone for support, have their hearts cleansed of the fire of passion and their sensual desires are as completely suppressed as poisonous matter is washed out by camphor.

The verse then goes on to say :

[128]*Al-Rahmān*, Verse 47.
[129]*Al-Dahr,* Verse 22.
[130]*Al-Dahr,* Verses 6-7.

وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلًا

And after they have drunk of the cup tempered with camphor, they are made to drink of another cup tempered with *Zanjabeel* (ginger).[131]

The last word requires a brief notice. *Zanjabeel* is a compound of *Zana* and *Jabl*. Of these component parts the first means "to ascend" and the second, "mountain." The compound word *Zanjabeel* therefore means "he ascended the mountain." Now, from a severe attack of a poisonous disease to perfect restoration of health, there are two stages. In the first stage, the poisonous germs are completely destroyed, the violence of the attack is mitigated and the danger which threatened life itself is averted. But the weakness which is the result of the attack does not vanish with the poison. The patient, though out of danger, cannot be said to be in sound health until full strength is restored to him If he stumbles and falls he is not yet a healthy person. The second stage of restoration to health is, therefore, that in which the patient regains his strength. The body is again full of life and vigour and he is not only able to walk with firm steps upon even ground, but has the courage and strength to try the ascent of a steep mountain and scale the heights cheerfully and without fear. This is the spiritual state which a person attains in the third stage of development. It is in reference to this stage that Almighty God says to the perfectly righteous that they are given to drink of a cup tempered with *Zanjabeel*, i.e., having attained full spiritual strength, they are able to go up steep mountainous paths, accomplish most difficult tasks and perform astonishing deeds of sacrifice in the path of God.

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[131] *Al-Dahr*, Verses 17-18.

It should also be borne in mind in connection with this point that *Zanjabeel*, or ginger, is the root of a plant very useful in promoting the natural heat of the body. The name given to it points to this property, for it gives strength to and generates heat in the weak body so as to enable a person to ascend precipitous heights. These two verses in which *Kāfur* and *Zanjabeel* are respectively spoken of call attention to the two stages through which a person must pass in order to make an advance from the low position of slavery to passion to the heights of virtue and righteousness. After the first movement which a man makes to rise, the first stage is that in which poisonous matters are suppressed and the flood of passions begins to subside. This we may term the *Kāfur* stage ; for in this stage what is effected is only the suppression of poisonous matter just as *Kāfur* has the property of nullifying the effect of poison. But the strength which is required to overcome all difficulties is only acquired in the second stage which is, therefore, called the *Zanjabeel*, (or the strengthening) stage. The spiritual *Zanjabeel*, which has the effect of a tonic on the spiritual system is the manifestation of Divine Beauty and Glory which afford nourishment to the soul. Braced with this manifestation, the seeker is able to traverse the dreary deserts and climb the steep heights which the spiritual wayfarer must traverse to reach the goal. The wonderful deeds of self-sacrifice that he is then able to perform are beyond the comprehension of those whose hearts are devoid of the zeal of love. To bring these two spiritual stages nearer to the understanding of men, two words have been employed by the Holy Quran, viz., *Kāfur*, or that which suppresses poisonous matters, and *Zanjabeel*, or that which gives strength to ascend the heights and overcome all difficulties.

The verses quoted above go on to say :

إِنَّآ أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكٰفِرِينَ سَلٰسِلَا۟ وَأَغْلٰلًا وَسَعِيرًا

Verily We have prepared for those who would not accept the truth, chains and collars and burning fire.[132]

This verse signifies that those who do not seek God with a pure heart are, by Divine law, repaid in their own coin. Their entanglements in worldly affairs do not allow them to move a step as if their feet had been enchained ; they are bent so low upon the mean cares of the world that they appear to have collars round their necks which do not allow them to raise their heads heavenward ; their hearts burn with carnal desires and greed to gain property or to overthrow a rival. Since God finds them engaged in the pursuit of low desires and unfit for higher and sublimer pursuits, He makes these three afflictions, viz., chains, collars, and fire, their constant companions

There is also an illusion here to the fact that every deed which a man does is followed by a corresponding act of God. If a man, for instance, closes all the doors of his room, the darkness that results is an act of God. In fact, whatever we term the natural consequences of our deeds are really the acts of God ; for God is the cause of causes. The taking of poison is a man's own deed but this is followed by God's punishing him with death. As in the material world, so too in the spiritual, the law holds good that whatever is done is followed by a necessary consequence. The Holy Quran refers to two different aspects of this law. It says in one place :

وَالَّذِينَ جٰهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

Those who strive for Us to their best, We shall, as a necessary consequence of their

[132]*Al-Dahr,* Verse 5.

efforts, guide them along the paths that lead to Us.[133]

But those "who go astray and walk not in the right path:

فَلَمَّا زَاغُوٓا أَزَاغَ ٱللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ

We cause their hearts to swerve from the line of duty."[134]

This point has been further explained in the following verse of the Holy Quran:

مَن كَانَ فِى هَٰذِهِۦٓ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِى ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ
سَبِيلًا

He who is blind here shall also be blind hereafter, nay, worse than the blind.[135]

This clearly indicates that it is in this life that the righteous see the face of God and that it is in this very life that He appears to them in all His majesty and glory. In short, it is in this world that a heavenly life begins and it is here and not hereafter that the basis of a hellish life is laid in the impurities of this life and blindness to spiritual realities.

Another verse bearing upon this subject runs thus:

وَبَشِّرِ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ
تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ

And give good tidings to those who believe and do what is right that they shall inherit gardens beneath which streams flow.[136]

In this verse Almighty God compares belief to gardens beneath which rivers flow. These words reveal a secret indicating the connection between faith and good deeds. As trees would wither away if they

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[133] *Al-Ankabūt*, Verse 70.
[134] *Al-Saff*, Verse 6.
[135] *Bani Isrā'il*, Verse 73.
[136] *Al-Baqara*, Verse 26.

were not watered, so faith without good deeds is dead. Faith without deeds is useless, and good deeds not actuated by faith are a mere show. The Islamic paradise is a true representation of the faith and good deeds of this life. Every man's paradise is an image of what he has done here below. It does not come from without but grows from within a man himself. It is his own faith and his own good deeds that take the form of a paradise for him to live in and its delight is tasted in this very life. The tree of faith and the streams of good deeds are even here discernible though not manifest ; but in the next life, all veils that hide them from the eye shall be removed and their existence shall be palpably felt. The perfect teaching of the Holy Word of God tells us that true, pure, strong, and perfect faith in God, His attributes and His will, is a delightful orchard, while the good deeds which a man does are, in fact, the streams flowing in the orchard, giving life and fruit to its trees. The same idea is elsewhere expressed in the Holy Quran in the following words:

مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا
ثَابِتٌ وَّفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَآءِ تُؤْتِيْٓ أُكُلَهَا كُلَّ
حِيْنٍ

> The good word of faith which is free from every excess or default and every defect, lie or joke, is like a good tree whose roots are firmly fixed in the earth, its branches shooting heavenward, yielding its fruit in all seasons and never experiencing a period of being without fruit.[137]

By comparing a good word of faith to a good tree that ever yields its fruit, Almighty God has called attention to three facts:

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[137] *Ibrāhim*, Verses 25-26.

1. That its root, which indicates its true significance, should be firmly fixed in the earth which represents the heart of man. The firm fixture of the root indicates the unqualified acceptance of the reality and truth of the faith by the nature and conscience of man.

2. That its branches should be in heaven, i.e., reason should attest to its truth and the heavenly laws of nature, being the work of God, should agree with it. In other words, that arguments of its truth should be deducible from the laws of nature and should be so high as if they were in heaven, being above every objection.

3. Its third sign is that it yields its fruit without ceasing, i.e., its influence and blessings are never intercepted and are felt in every age and every clime. They do not exist for a time and then cease.

Another verse then follows:

مَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ ٱجْتُثَّتْ
مِن فَوْقِ ٱلْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِن قَرَارٍ

> And an evil word is like an evil tree torn up from the face of the earth (i.e., rejected by the nature and conscience of man) without strength to stand (i.e., it is neither supported by arguments nor by the laws of nature and is a mere assertion or an idle tale).[138]

It should, therefore, be borne in mind that as the Holy Quran has compared the holy words of faith to plants bearing delicious fruits such as grapes, pomegranates, etc., as being embodiments of what is enjoyable in this world, it has also described the evil tree of unbelief under the name of *Zaqqūm*. Thus it says:

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[138] *Ibrāhim,* Verse 27.

أَذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ نُّزُلًا أَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّوْمِ إِنَّا جَعَلْنٰهَا
فِتْنَةً لِّلظّٰلِمِيْنَ إِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِيْٓ أَصْلِ الْجَحِيْمِ

Are the gardens of paradise better or the tree of *Zaqqum*? Verily We have made it an affliction for the wicked; it is a tree which comes up from the root of hell (i.e., grows up from vanity and self-glory as being the root of hell); its fruit is as the heads of Satans.[139]

Shaitan, or satan, means one whose end is destruction, being derived from *Shait*, meaning to perish. What is meant by those words is that the eating of it brings damnation and destruction as the reasult.

إِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الزَّقُّوْمِ طَعَامُ الْأَثِيْمِ كَالْمُهْلِ
يَغْلِيْ فِي الْبُطُوْنِ كَغَلْيِ الْحَمِيْمِ

Verily the tree of *Zaqqūm* shall be the food of those who wilfully incline to a sinful course of life; it is like molten copper and shall boil up in their bellies like the boiling of scalding water.

And addressing the damned one it goes on to say:

ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْكَرِيْمُ

Taste the fruit of this tree, for thou, forsooth, art the mighty, the honourable.[140]

The closing words are expressive of the wrath of God. They indicate that if the sinner had not been self-conceited or had not turned his back upon the truth for the sake of his false honour, and greatness, he would not have had to taste that fruit and afflic-

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139 *Saff āt*, Verses 63-65.
140 *Al-Dukhān*, Verses 44-50.

tion. The last verse also suggests that the word *Zaqqūm* is made up of *Zuq* and *um*, the former part meaning "taste thou" and the letter being an abbreviation of the whole sentence, in which the first and last letters of the sentence are taken. (Frequent application has changed the letter *dhāl* of the Arabic alphabet into *Za*, both sounding like Z.)

In short, God has likened the words of faith uttered in this life to the trees of paradise and the words of faithlessness to *Zaqqūm*, the tree of hell, and thus shown that a heavenly or a hellish life commences in this world. Relating to hell the Holy Quran also says :

نَارُ اللّٰهِ الْمُوْقَدَةُ الَّتِىْ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْاَفْئِدَةِ

> Hell is a fire of which the source is the wrath of God, it is kindled in sin and the flames thereof reach the heart first of all.[141]

This is an allusion to the fact that the grief, sorrow, and affliction which overpower the heart really kindle the fire of hell; for all spiritual tortures overtake the heart first and then consume the whole body. Again, we also read concerning hell-fire in the Holy Quran.

وَقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَ الْحِجَارَةُ

> The fuel of hell-fire (things which keep it constantly burning) are two : First, the people (who, instead of the true God, worship other things or with whose consent other things are worshipped) and secondly, the idols that are worshipped.[142]

Elsewhere it is said :

اِنَّكُمْ وَمَا

تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ

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141 *Al-Humaza*, Verses 7-8.
142 *Al-Baqara*, Verse 25.

Verily, you and your false gods who in spite of their being creatures asserted their divinity shall be cast into hell.[143]

From this it would appear that Heaven and Hell are not material worlds like this but that spiritual facts are their source and origin. This remark requires to be qualified in one way, viz., that the blessings and tortures of the next world shall be the embodiments of the spiritual facts of this one but notwithstanding this they shall not be things of this world.

Means of Perfect Union with God

Returning to the main point of the subject under discussion, the Holy Quran has taught us two means for a perfect spiritual union with God, viz., complete resignation to the will of God, which is known by the name of *Islam*, and constant prayers and supplications as taught in the opening *Sura* of the Holy Quran known by the name of *Fatiha*. The essence of the religious code of our faith is contained in *Islam* and the *Fātiha*. These are two channels which lead to the fountain of salvation and the only safe guides which lead us to God. These are the only means to attain the desired end of the highest spiritual advancement and ultimate union with God. They alone can find God who realize the true significance of Islam by actually entering into it and who pray as taught in the *Fātiha*.

What is Islam? It is the burning fire which consumes all low desires and, setting fire to false gods, offers our life, property and honour as a sacrifice before God. It is the fountain from which we drink the waters of a new life. The spiritual powers within us are united together as strongly as the links of a chain. A fire resembling that of lightning flashes out of us and a fire descends from above. These two flames uniting with each other consume all low motives and

143 *Al-Anbiya*, Verse 99.

carnal desires and the love of others than God. A sort of death comes over our previous life. This state is signified by the word Islam. Islam brings about the death of the passions of the flesh and bestows new life upon us. This is true regeneration. The word of God must be revealed to the person who reaches this stage. This stage is termed union, for it is then that a person sees the face of God. His connection with God is so strong that he, as it were, sees God with his eyes. He is granted strength from above; the internal faculties are all illumined and the magnetism of a pure heavenly life works strongly. Upon reaching this stage, God becomes his eye with which he sees, his tongue with which he speaks, his hand with which he repels attack, his ear with which he hears and his foot with which he walks. It is in reference to this stage that Almighty God says:

يَدُ اللّٰهِ فَوْقَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ

> The hand of the Prophet which is above their hands is the hand of God.[144]

And again:

وَمَا رَمَيْتَ اِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ رَمٰى

> Whatever thou castest, not thou but God has cast[145]

In short, this is the stage of the perfection of man and of his union with God. The will of God predominates over every desire, and the moral conditions, which were at first defenceless against the passions of the flesh, are strengthened so as to be proof against every attack. With this holy transformation, reason and understanding are also refined. It is to this condition that the verse, "And God aided them with His Holy Spirit", refers. The love of such a person for

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[144] *Al-Fat-h*, Verse 11.
[145] *Anfāl*, Verse 18.

his Lord knows no bounds. To die for God and to suffer persecution or disgrace for His sake, however strange the expression might sound to other ears, are to him a matter of course. Being drawn, he flies toward God but does not know what attracts him. An invisible hand supports him under all conditions, and to fulfil the will of God becomes the principle object of his life. He finds himself close to God as the Holy Quran says:

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

We are closer to him than his neck-vein.[146]

As ripened fruit falls from a tree of its own accord, the low connections of such a man, in like manner, are severed of themselves. He has a deep relationship with God and is removed far off from the creatures. He speaks with God and is spoken to by Him. To reach this stage the doors are as wide open now as they were in times past. The grace of God does not withhold this blessing from earnest seekers now but vouchsafes it to them as bountifully today as it did in the past. But the vanities of the tongue do not lead in this direction, and mere boasting or idle talk does not open this door. Many desire to attain it but very few find it because it cannot be found without earnest search and true sacrifice. Sing *lo triumph* as long as you will, it will not avail. Difficult is the way and dangerous the path and you cannot walk in it as long as you do not set your foot with true sincerity upon the burning fire, which others fly from. Boasting avails little when there is no zeal and earnestness. Read the verse of the Holy Quran which says:

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[146] *Qāf*, Verse 17.

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ
دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

And if My servants ask thee concerning Me, tell them that I am very near them ; I listen to the supplications of the supplicators ; therefore, they ought to seek My union with prayers and believe in Me so that proceeding aright they may arrive at fulfilment.[147]

[147] *Al-Baqara*, Verse 187.

Question Two :

The State of Man in the After-Life

What is the teaching of the Holy Quran as to the state of man in the life after death, is the next question which offers itself for solution. Briefly, the state after death is not altogether a new state; it is in fact a complete representation, a full and clear image, of our spiritual state in the present life. Here the good or bad aspects of the acts or beliefs of a man are latent within him and their benefit or harm is often perceived only indirectly, but in the life to come they shall become manifest and clear as daylight. An idea of it, although a very imperfect one, may be had from the manner in which a person sees in a dream the embodiment of whatever is predominant in his temperament. When he is due for a severe attack of fever, he may see in a dream flames of burning fire, or he may find himself in floods of water when he is about to catch cold.

In short, when the body is tending towards a particular disease, a dream may often disclose the embodiment of the conditions giving rise to it. From the manner in which internal conditions are represented in physical forms in dreams, we can form some idea of the embodiment of the spiritual conditions of this world in the life to come. After our earthly course is run, we are translated to regions where our deeds and their consequences assume a manifest shape; and what is hidden in us in this world is there unrolled and laid open before us. These embodiments of spiritual facts are manifest realities, as even in a dream, though the sight soon vanishes away, yet so long as it is before our eyes, it is perceived as a reality. As this representation by images is a new and a perfect manifestation of the power of God, we may call it, not a representation of certain facts, but a new creation brought about by the powerful hand of God. With reference to this point, Almighty God says in the Holy Quran:

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ

> No soul that worketh good knoweth the blessings and joys which have been kept secret for it to be disclosed after death.[1]

Thus Almighty God describes the heavenly blessings that the righteous shall enjoy in the next life as having been kept secret because, not being like anything in this world, no one knows aught about them. It is evident that the things of this world are not a secret to us; we not only know pomegranates, grapes, milk, etc., but frequently taste of them. These things, therefore, could not be called secrets. The fruits of paradise have, therefore, nothing in common with these except the name. He is perfectly ignorant of the Holy Quran who takes paradise for a place where the things of this world are provided in abundance.

In explanation of the verse above, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) said that heaven and its blessings are things which "the eye hath not seen, nor hath the ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of them." But of the things of this world we cannot say that our eyes have not seen them, or that our ears have not heard them, or that our minds have not conceived of them. When God and His Prophet tell us of things in heaven which our senses are not cognizant of in this world, we should be guilty of cherishing doctrines against the teachings of the Holy Quran if we supposed, for instance, rivers flowing with the milk which we ordinarily drink here. Can we moreover consistently with the idea of heaven suppose herds of cows and buffaloes reared in paradise and numerous honeycombs hanging on trees with countless bees busily engaged in collecting honey and hosts of angels engaged day and night in milking cows and getting honey and pouring them continuously into streams to keep them running? Are these ideas in keeping with the teachings of the verses which tell us that this world is a stranger to the blessings of the next world? Will

[1] *Al-Sajdah,* Verse 18.

these things illumine the soul or increase the knowledge of God or afford spiritual food as the heavenly blessings are designed to do? It is, no doubt, true that these blessings are represented as material things but we are also told that their source is spirituality and righteousness.

The following verse of the Holy Quran, which has sometimes been misunderstood, is far from describing the heavenly blessings as being identical with the things of this world. The verse runs thus:

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتٍ
تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوْا مِنْهَا مِنْ
ثَمَرَةٍ رِّزْقًا قَالُوْا هٰذَا الَّذِيْ رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَاُتُوْا
بِهٖ مُتَشَابِهًا

> Bear good tidings to those who believe and do good works that they shall inherit gardens beneath which rivers flow. So often as they are fed in that life with fruits, they shall say: These are the fruits which were given us formerly, because they shall find the fruits of after-life resembling the fruits which were given them here.[2]

Now the context clearly shows that the fruits which the righteous are said to have tasted here do by no means mean the fruits of trees or the things of this world. The verse in fact tells us that those who believe and do good works prepare a paradise with their own hands for themselves, with their faith for trees and their good deeds for fruits. It is of the fruits of this garden that they taste spiritually here and of the fruits of the same shall they eat in the next life; only the spiritual fruits of this life shall be transformed into palpable and more delicious fruits in the next life. But as they shall have already tasted of them spiritually in this life, they shall be able to iden-

[2]*Al-Baqara,* Verse 26.

tify the fruits of that life with those of this and witnessing the close resemblance between the two shall cry out, "These are the fruits which were given us in the former life."

The Nature of the Life Hereafter

The verse, therefore, tells us in plain words that those who spiritually taste the love of God in this world shall be physically sustained by the same food in the next life. The blessings of the next life shall recall to their minds the spiritual blessings of the love of God which they tasted in this life, and they shall remember the time when in seclusion and at the dead of night alone and in silence they found their sweet enjoyment in the remembrance of God.

In short, the verse quoted above does not speak of the things of this world or food which the righteous used to eat here. If it be objected that the words of this verse seem to contradict the saying of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of God be on him, already quoted, which describe the blessings of heavenly life as unseen by worldly eyes, unheard of by human ears and inconceivable by the mind of man the answer is that the contradiction appears only if we take the words "these are the fruits which were given us in our former life," as indicating temporal blessings enjoyable in this life by all men whether good or bad. But if the "fruits" spoken of here be understood to mean the fruits of good works, the spiritual blessings which the good enjoy in this very life, there is no contradiction. Whatever the good men enjoy spiritually in this life are really blessings not of this but of the next life and are granted to them as a specimen of the bliss that is in store for them in the next life in order to increase their yearning for it.

It should, moreover, be borne in mind that the truly righteous man is not of this world and hence he is hated by the world. He is of heaven and is granted heavenly blessings just as the worldly ones are grant-

ed the dainties of this world. The blessings which are granted him are really hidden from the eyes, the ears and the hearts of men of the world and they are utter strangers to them But the person whose life in this world has been transformed so that he tastes spiritually the cup which he shall actually quaff in the next world shall truly utter the words: "These are the fruits which were given us formerly." But he shall at the same time be perfectly aware that those blessings were quite unknown to the world, and as he too was *in* this world though not *of* this world, so he also shall bear witness that his physical eye never saw such blessings, nor his ear ever heard of them, nor his mind ever conceived of them in the world. But in his second life i.e., after his regeneration, he did witness specimens of these things but this was only when, all his lower connections having been cut asunder, higher ones were established with the next world.

After-Life, an Image of the Present Life

The Holy Quran has described three important points in connection with the next life.

First, it has repeatedly explained that the life after death is not a new life but only an image and manifestation of this life. Thus it says:

وَكُلَّ اِنْسَانٍ اَلْزَمْنٰهُ طٰٓئِرَهٗ فِيْ عُنُقِهٖ وَنُخْرِجُ
لَهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ كِتٰبًا يَّلْقٰىهُ مَنْشُوْرًا

> And We have in this very life bound the effects of a man's deeds about his neck, and these hidden effects shall We bring to light on the day of resurrection in the form of a book wide open.[3]

The word *Tāir* used in this verse should be particularly noticed. *Tāir* literally means a bird and is here used metaphorically to signify the actions of men, for

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[3] *Baui Isrā'il*, Verse 14.

every action, whether good or bad, takes flight like a bird. The bliss or burden which a person feels in the performance of an action passes away but it leaves its good or bad impression upon the heart. The Holy Quran has disclosed the important truth that every act makes a mysterious impression upon the heart. Every action of a man is, in fact, followed by an action of God which imprints its good or bad effect not only upon the heart but also upon the hands, the feet, the ears, the eyes, etc., of the doer. This book which records every action, and hidden from the human eye, is being prepared in this life shall show itself clearly in the next. Referring to the heavenly life, the Holy Word says elsewhere:

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ
بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ

> On that day the light of faith which is even here granted to the faithful men and women shall be seen clearly running before them and on their right hands.[4]

With regard to the wicked, the Holy Book says:

أَلْهَاكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ حَتَّى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ كَلَّا سَوْفَ
تَعْلَمُونَ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ
عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ
الْيَقِينِ ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ

> Your desires and passions turn you away (from the search of the next life) until you are consigned to the grave. (Do not be so engrossed with the cares of this world, for) you shall soon know that the love of the world does not lead to good consequences;

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[4]*Al-Hadid,* Verse 13.

> once more I say to you that you shall soon come to know the evil consequences of the love of this world. Had you the knowledge of certainty, you could have seen hell in this life; but (in the interval between death and resurrection) you shall surely see it with the eye of certainty, and at last on the day of resurrection you shall realize the truth by personally undergoing the punishment.[5]

These verses leave no doubt as to the commencement of a hellish life in this very world. The hell of the next life is prepared in this, hidden from the human eye, but can be recognized with the knowledge of certainty, by those who reflect upon it. Almighty God has here described three stages of certainty, viz., *Ilm-ul-Yaqeen*, or certainty by inference, *Ain-ul-Yaqeen*, or certainty by sight and *Haqq-ul-Yaqeen*, or certainty by realization. A homely illustration would perhaps make the subject more easily comprehensible. If a person sees a column of smoke from a distance he concludes the existence of a fire, as nothing else can give rise to smoke. He thus obtains certainty by inference with regard to the presence of fire, which is called the knowledge of certainty in the verse quoted above. But if he walks on to the place from which the smoke rises and actually sees the flames, he obtains a knowledge with the eye which is certainty by sight. To realize the truth of certainty he must thrust his hand into the fire and the certainty he thus attains to is certainty by realization. These are also the three stages of human knowledge with regard to hell. The knowledge of certainty can be had in this world by those who will, but in the interval between death and resurrection, a man sees hell with the eye of certainty, while at the day of resurrection he shall realize the truth of the certainty by himself entering into hell.

[3] *Al-Takāsur*, Verses 1-9.

Three Worlds of Man's Life

It should be borne in mind that the Holy Quran describes three worlds or three different states of man's life:

The First World—The World of Earning

The first world is the present one which is called the world of earning and of the first creation. It is here that man earns a reward for the good or bad deeds he does. Although there are stages of advancement of the good after resurrection, yet that advancement is granted simply by the grace of God and does not depend upon human effort.

The Second World—*The Barzakh*

The second world is called *Barzakh*. The word means any intermediate state. As this world falls between the present life and resurrection, it has been called *Barzakh*. But this word has from time immemorial been applied to an intermediate state and thus the word itself is a standing witness to the intermediate state between death and after-life.

We have shown in our book, *Minan-ur-Rahmān*, that the Arabic language is the only language which can claim to be Divine, the fountain from which all sorts of knowledge flow, the mother of all tongues and the first as well as the last medium of Divine revelation. It is the first because Arabic was the Word of God which was with God and was at last revealed to the world, from which men learned to make their own languages, and the last because the last Divine Book, i.e., the Holy Quran, is also in Arabic. *Barzakh* is a word of Arabic origin and is a compound of *Bar* and *Zakh* and literally means that "the period of earning merit or demerit by deeds is over." The state of *Barzakh* is that in which the soul leaves the mortal body and the perishable remains are decomposed.

The body is thrown into a pit and the soul also is, as it were, thrown down into a pit as is indicated by the word *Barzakh* because it loses the power to do good or bad deeds along with its loss of control over the body. It is evident that a good state of the soul is dependent upon the soundness of the body. A shock communicated to a particular part of the brain causes a loss of memory while an injury to another part is certain to damage the reasoning faculty and may even destroy consciousness. Similarly a convulsion of the brain muscles or a hemorrhage or morbidity of the brain may, by causing obstruction, lead to insensibility, epilepsy, or cerebral apoplexy.

Experience, therefore, establishes the fact beyond all reasonable doubt that with all its connections severed from the body, the soul can serve no purpose. It is idle to assert that the human soul can, at any time, enjoy a bliss without having any connection with a body. It may please us as an interesting tale but reason and experience lend no support to it. We can hardly imagine the soul to be in a perfect condition when all its connections with the body are cut off, in face of our recurring experience that the slightest derangement of the physical system interrupts the functions of the soul as well. Do we not witness that when a person becomes decrepit with old age the soul also is enfeebled and age often steals away the whole store of its knowledge. The Holy Word says, referring to the decrepitude of old age:

لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا

> A man lives to such an old age that all his former knowledge is clean forgotten.[6]

These observations will be sufficient to demonstrate that the soul is nothing unless it has its connection with a body. Had it any value apart from the body the action of an All-wise Being in uniting the

[6] *Al-Hajj,* Verse 6.

soul with a short-lived body would have been quite meaningless. Moreover, man is essentially a progressive animal and the advancement which he aims at is by no means a limited one. Now if the soul is unable to make any advancement in this brief life without the assistance of the body, how could it, without a body, attain to the higher stages of advancement in the next life?

In short, according to the Islamic principles, the perfection of the soul depends upon its permanent connection with a body. There is no doubt that after death, this body of clay is severed from the soul but then in the *Barzakh*, every soul receives temporarily a new body to be in a position to taste of the reward or punishment of its deeds. This new body is not a body of clay but a bright or a dark body prepared from the actions of this life. Such is the Quranic description of the body in the *Barzakh*, viz., that the soul has a new body which is bright and dark according to the good or bad actions which a man performs. It may appear as a mystery to some but this much at least must be admitted that it is not unreasonable. The perfect man realizes the preparation of such a bright body even in this life. Ordinary human understanding may regard it as mystery which is beyond comprehension but those who possess keen and bright spiritual sight will have no difficulty in realizing the truth of a bright or a dark body after death prepared from actions in this life. In short, the new body granted in the *Barzakh* becomes the means of the reward of good or evil.

I have personal experience in this matter. Many a time, when fully awake, I have seen visions in which I saw those who were dead. I have seen many an evil-doer and a wicked person with a body quite dark and smoky. I have personal acquaintance with these matters and I assert it strongly that, as Almighty God has said, every one is granted a body either transparent or dark. It is not necessary that unaided reason

should be able to comprehend these mysteries. The eye sees things but it is vain to expect it to serve as an organ of taste. Similarly the muscles of the tongue may be used for tasting things but as organs of sight they are useless. In like manner, the deep secrets of the other world upon which light is thrown only by visions, cannot be discovered by the help of reason. Almighty God has established certain laws in this world and particular means for the knowledge of particular things. To know a thing, therefore, we must seek first the proper means and then we are sure to discover the thing itself.

It must also be remembered in connection with this point that the Word of God has described those who walk in error and wickedness as dead and lifeless while the good it calls living. The secret of it is that the means of life of those who are ignorant of God, being simply eating, drinking or indulgence of their passions, are cut off along with their death. Of spiritual food they have no share and therefore their resurrection will only be for their punishment. It is in allusion to this that Almighty God says:

إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُجْرِمًا فَإِنَّ لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ
لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيٰى

> And he who comes to his Lord as a sinful person shall have his abode in hell; he shall neither die nor live therein.[7]

But the beloved ones of God do not die with their physical death for they have their means of sustenance with them.

The Third World—The Resurrection

The third world is the world of resurrection. In this world every soul, good or bad, virtuous or wicked, shall be given a visible body. The day of resurrection.

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[7] *Tā Hā*, Verse 75.

is the day of the complete manifestation of God's glory when every one shall become perfectly aware of the existence of God. On that day every person shall have a complete and open reward of his actions How this can be brought about is not a matter to wonder at for God is All-Powerful and nothing is impossible with Him. Thus He says in the Holy Quran :

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَٰهُ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا
هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ
قَالَ مَنْ يُّحْيِ الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا
الَّذِيٓ أَنْشَأَهَآ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ

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أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقٰدِرٍ عَلَىٰٓ
أَنْ يَّخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْخَلّٰقُ الْعَلِيمُ إِنَّمَآ أَمْرُهُ
إِذَآ أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَّقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ فَسُبْحٰنَ
الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

Doth not man know that We have created him of the moist germs of life ; then he became an open disputer. He talks vainly with regard to Us and forgets his own creation. "Who," says he, "has the power to restore man to life even when his bones shall be rotten and no trace shall be left behind ? " Say : "He shall give life to them Who gave them being at first and He is skilled in every kind and manner of creation." Is not He Who created the earth and the heavens able to create your like ? Yea, certainly ; for He is the wise Creator. His command is such

that when He wills a thing He only says unto it "Be," and it comes into existence. So glory be to Him Whose sway extends over all things and to Him shall ye all return.[8]

In these verses Almighty God tells us that with Him nothing is impossible, for when He could create man out of an insignificant thing at first, He cannot be regarded as destitute of the power to bring him to life a second time.

It might be objected that when a long period of time must elapse before the world of resurrection is brought into existence, the *Barzakh*, where the souls of both good and bad men must remain in the meanwhile, is no better than a useless lock-up for souls. The objection is due to lack of knowledge, for the *Barzakh* is as well a place of reward for good and evil as the resurrection itself. The Word of God describes *Barzakh* as a place where punishment and reward shall be given though they will not be so manifest, as after the resurrection. The Holy Quran abounds with verses stating that a man meets with his due immediately after his death. Thus, speaking of a certain person, it says:

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ

It was said to him: enter into paradise.[9]

And of another it says:

فَرَآهُ فِي سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ

A good man had an unbelieving friend in this life and when they both died, the good man, anxious to know the state of his friend, was shown that he was in the midst of hell.[10]

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[8] *Yāsin,* Verses 78-83.
[9] *Yāsin,* Verse 27.
[10] *Al-Sāffāt,* Verse 56.

Punishment and reward are thus bestowed immediately after death, and those whose proper place is hell are brought to hell while those who deserve paradise are brought to paradise. But the day of resurrection is the day of the manifestation of the highest glory of God which His transcendent wisdom has ordained should at last be brought about. God created man that He might be recognized as the Creator ; He will destroy all that He may be recognized as the Vanquisher of all ; and, last of all, He shall give a perfect life to all and assemble them that He may be recognized as the All-Powerful Being.

Spiritual Facts of This Life Represented as Embodiment in the Next

The second point of importance which the Holy Quran has described with reference to the life to come is that the spiritual facts of this life shall be represented in the next (whether *Barzakh* or Resurrection) as embodiments. Some of the verses bearing upon this subject are the following :

مَنْ كَانَ فِي هٰذِهٖٓ اَعْمٰى فَهُوَ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْمٰى وَاَضَلُّ
سَبِيْلًا

He who is blind here shall be blind hereafter.[11]

In other words, the spiritual blindness of this world shall become apparent and shall be seen as actual blindness in the next.

خُذُوْهُ فَغُلُّوْهُ ثُمَّ الْجَحِيْمَ صَلُّوْهُ ثُمَّ فِيْ
سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُوْنَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوْهُ

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[11] *Bani Isrā'il*, Verse 73.

> Lay ye hold on him, then put chains round his neck, then cast him into hell to be burned: then with a chain whose length is seventy cubits secure him.[12]

It should be noted that the spiritual torture of this world has been represented as a physical punishment in the next world in these verses. The chain to be put round the neck, for instance, represents the desires of this world which keep a man with his head bent upon the earth, and it is these desires that shall assume the shape of a chain. Similarly the entanglements of this world shall be seen as chains on the feet. The heart-burning of this world shall likewise be clearly seen as flames of burning fire. The wicked one has, in fact, in this very world within himself a hell of the passions and inextinguishable desires of this world and feels the burning of that hell in the failures he meets with. When, therefore, he shall be cast farther off from his temporal desires and shall see an everlasting despair before him, his heart-burning and bitter sighs for his dear desires shall assume the shape of burning fire. The Holy Quran says:

وَحِيلَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ

> And a barrier shall be placed between them and that which they desire and this shall be the beginning of their torture.[13]

The securing with a chain of the length of seventy cubits reveals the same deep secret. The limit of age may, as a general rule, be fixed at seventy and a wicked person often lives up to that age in his wickedness. He sometimes even enjoys seventy years excluding the periods of childhood and decrepitude. These seventy years, during which he could work with honesty, wisdom, and zeal, he wastes away in the entanglements of the world and in following his sensual pas-

[12] *Al-Hāqqah,* Verse 31-33.
[13] *Al-Sabā,* Verse 55.

sions. He does not try to free himself from the chain of desires, and, therefore, in the next world the chain of desires, which he indulged in for seventy years shall be embodied into a chain of seventy cubits length, every cubit representing a year, with which the wicked one shall be fettered. It should thus be remembered that the punishment which overtakes a man is one prepared by his own hands, and his own evil deeds become the source of his torture. This law is elsewhere expressed in the Holy Quran in the following words:

اِنْطَلِقُوْٓا اِلٰى ظِلٍّ ذِىْ ثَلٰثِ شُعَبٍ لَّا ظَلِيْلٍ
وَّلَا يُغْنِىْ مِنَ اللَّهَبِ

> O ye wicked ones! Begone to the shadow of three branches which cannot shade you from the heat, nor is it of any service against the flames of fire.[14]

The three branches spoken of here represent bestiality, savageness, and infatuation which, if not restrained, lead to transgressions and evil deeds. These three shall appear on the day of judgment as three branches without any leaves and therefore availing nothing against heat.

To declare the same law Almighty God says of those who are in paradise:

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ يَسْعٰى نُوْرُهُمْ
بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَبِاَيْمَانِهِمْ

> On that day thou shall see the believing men and women with their light which was hidden in this life running in full lustre before them and on their right hands.[15]

In another verse He says:

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[14] *Al-Mursalāt*, Verses 31-32.
[15] *Al-Hadid*, Verse 13.

يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ

On that day some faces shall turn bright and others shall turn dark.[16]

And again :

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ
مَاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ
وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ
عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى

Suppose a garden wherein are rivers of water which corrupt not, and rivers of milk whose taste changeth not and rivers of wine which doth not intoxicate but giveth pleasure to those who drink it and rivers of clarified honey. This is a representation of the paradise which shall be granted to the righteous.[17]

From this verse it appears clearly that the promised paradise is only a representation of boundless oceans of all these things. The water of life which the righteous man drinks spiritually in this world shall there appear manifestly as a river, the spiritual milk with which he is here spiritually nourished like a child, shall there manifest itself as a river of milk, the spiritual wine of the love of God with which he remains in a blissful state in the world shall assume the shape of a river flowing with wine, and the honey of the sweetness of faith which he spiritually tastes here shall flow in paradise in palpable rivers. The spiritual state of every person shall on that day become vis-

[16] *Al Imrān,* Verse 107.

[17] *Muhammad,* Verse 16.

ible to all in his gardens and rivers, and God also shall reveal Himself to the righteous in His full glory on that day. In short, the spiritual states shall no more remain hidden but shall manifest themselves palpably.

Infinite Progress

The third point of importance that the Holy Quran has described in connection with the life after death is that the progress that can be made in that life is infinite. The Word of God says:

وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ نُوْرُهُمْ يَسْعٰى بَيْنَ
اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَبِاَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَآ اَتْمِمْ لَنَا
نُوْرَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا اِنَّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

> Those who have the light of faith in this world shall have their light on the day of judgment running before them and on their right hands and they shall be continually saying: "O Lord perfect unto us our light and take us under Thy protection; for Thou has power over all things."[18]

This unceasing desire for perfection shows clearly that progress in paradise shall be endless. For, when they shall have attained one excellence, they shall not stop there but seeing a higher stage of excellence shall consider that to which they shall have attained as imperfect and shall, therefore, desire the attainment of the higher excellence. When they shall have attained to this, they shall yet see another higher excellence and thus they shall continue to pray for the attainment of higher and higher excellences. This ceaseless desire for perfection shows that they shall be endlessly attaining to excellences.

In short, the righteous shall go on making progress and shall never recede a step nor shall they ever be

[18]*Al-Tahrim,* Verse 9.

deprived of those blessings. The question may arise here as to the seeking of *Maghfirat* after entry into paradise. Such a question is, however, due to lack of appreciation of the true meaning of *Maghfirat* and *Istighfār*. *Maghfirat* means a suppression of a defective state. The righteous shall be continually praying to God for the attainment of perfection and complete immersion in light. They shall be ever ascending upwards and shall regard every state as defective in comparison with a higher one to which they shall aspire and shall, therefore, pray God to suppress the defective state that they may be able to get to the higher. Their desire for *Maghfirat*, or a suppression of the defective state, shall therefore be endless because the progress which they shall make shall also be endless. We can clearly see from this verse the true significance of the word *Istighfār*, and also that the desire of *Istighfār* is really the pride of man because it is the only thing which leads him on to the highest excellences which a man is capable of achieving. The person who, being born of a woman, does not constantly recur to *Istighfār*, is not a man but a worm. He is blind and does not see and has an impure heart.

In short, heaven and hell, according to the Holy Quran, are images and representatives of a man's own spiritual life in this world. They are not new material worlds which come from outside. It is true that they shall be visible and palpable, call them material if you please, but they are only embodiments of the spiritual facts of this life. We call them material not in the sense that there shall be trees planted in the elysian fields just like those that are planted here below and that there shall be brimstone and sulphur in hell but in the sense that we shall there find the embodiments of the spiritual facts of this life. Heaven and hell, according to Islamic teachings, are the images of the actions which we perform here below.

Question Three :

The Object of Man's Life and the Means of its Attainment

The third question set by the Conference relates to the objects of man's life here below and the means by which those objects may be attained. It is needless to say that different men have, on account of their superficial views or narrow-mindedness, set before themselves different objects generally limited to a gratification of low desires and the pleasures of the world. But Almighty God has in His Holy Word declared a much higher object of man's existence. The Holy Quran says :

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

> I have not created the *Jinn* and the men but that they should know Me and worship Me.[1]

The Real Object

The real object of man's life according to the Holy Quran is, therefore, a true knowledge and worship of God and a total resignation to His will so that whatever is said or done is said or done for His sake only. One thing, at least, is plain and that is that man has no choice in the matter of fixing the aim of his life. He does not enter the world or leave it as he desires. He is a creature and the Creator Who has brought him into existence and bestowed upon him higher and more excellent faculties than upon other animals has also assigned an object to his existence. A man may or may not understand it or a hundred different motives may hold him back from it, but the truth is that the grand aim of man's life consists in knowing and worshipping God and living for His sake. Almighty God says in the Holy Quran :

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

[1]*Al-Zāriyāt*, Verse 57.

> Verily the religion which gives a true knowledge of God and directs in the most excellent way to His worship is Islam.[2]

And again:

فِطْرَتَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِیْ فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَیْهَا لَا تَبْدِیْلَ
لِخَلْقِ اللّٰهِ ذٰلِكَ الدِّیْنُ الْقَیِّمُ

> Islam responds to and supplies the demands of human nature and God has created man after the model of Islam, i.e., He has willed it that man should devote his faculties to the love, obedience, and worship of God. It is for this reason that Almighty God has granted him faculties which are suited for Islam.[3]

We cannot enter upon a detailed commentary on these verses here. Something has already been said in answer to the third part of the first question in connection with this point. We may here add a few remarks upon the wonderful aptitude of the faculties of man for Islam. The external and internal endowments of human nature give us clearly to understand that the highest object of their creation is the love and worship of God. True happiness, which is generally admitted to be the goal of life, is not attainable through the diverse pursuits which men follow but only through God. Not all the joys of this world can afford relief from the gnawing grief which attends a man's last moments upon this earth. The richest millionaire, the highest official, the most successful merchant, the greatest king, or the wisest philosopher does not possess peace of mind and departs from this world a prey to poignant regret. His heart upbraids him for his absorption in worldly cares and his con-

[2] *Al-Imrān*, Verse 20.

[3] *Al-Rūm*, Verse 31.

science judges him guilty of the employment of deceit and unfair means to attain success in his worldly affairs.

Consider the question in another light. In the case of the lower animals, we see that their faculties are so ordered as to render them unable to serve a purpose higher than a particular one and they cannot go beyond a certain limit. This leads us to the conclusion that the highest limit which the faculties of a particular animal can reach is also the highest aim of its creation. A bullock, for instance, may be used to furrow the earth or draw water or for loading but with its present faculties it can serve no higher purpose. This is, therefore, also the aim of its existence. Judging man in the same manner we find that of all faculties which nature has bestowed upon him, the highest is that which awakens him to a search after God and incites him to the noble aspiration of losing his own self in the love of God and completely submitting himself to His will. In the requirements of his physical nature the lower animals are on a level with him. In art some animals display more skill than human beings. The bee produces honey from the juice of flowers with such exquisite skill that man has failed with all his genius to achieve anything like it. The perfection of man, therefore, does not consist in these matters but in something else. It consists in the excellence of his spirituality, in his union with God. The true object of his life in this world is, therefore, that the window of his soul should be opened towards God.

Eight Means of Its Attainment

We are now in a position to answer the second part of the question, viz., how can this object be attained.

The Recognition of God

The first means towards the attainment of this end is that in the recognition of God a man should tread upon the right path and have his faith in the true and living God. The goal can never be reached by the man who takes the first step in the wrong direction and looks upon some stone or creature or an element of nature as his Deity. The true God assists those who seek Him but a dead deity cannot assist its dead worshippers. Almighty God has well illustrated this in a parable:

لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ
لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُم بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا كَبَاسِطِ كَفَّيْهِ إِلَى
الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِبَالِغِهِ وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ
إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ

Prayer is rightly directed only when it is addressed to the true God for He has power over everything but the deities to whom people pray beside Him give them no answer at all. Their case is like that of the person who stretches forth his hands to the water and prays it to reach his mouth. Will it then reach his mouth? Not at all. Those who are ignorant of the true and living God pray in vain to their false deities and their prayers are in error.[4]

Knowledge of God's Perfect Beauty

The second means towards the attainment of the true object of life consists in being informed of the perfect beauty which the Divine Being possesses. Beauty naturally attracts the heart and incites love.

[4] *Al-Ra'd,* Verse 15.

The beauty of God consists in His Unity, His Majesty, His Grandeur and His other lofty attributes. The Holy Quran draws attention to this in the following well-known verse :

قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ اَللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ
يُوْلَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ

> God is alone in His person, attributes and glory and has no partner ; all need His support, every single atom owes its existence to Him, He receives favour from none but bestows it upon all ; He is neither a son nor a father ; for there is none of His kind.[5]

The Holy Quran teems with verses declaring the omnipotence, majesty and glory of God. It presents a god who attracts the heart on account of His beauty and majesty and rejects the dead, weak, unmerciful, and powerless gods of false religions.

Realization of God's Goodness

The third means of reaching the goal consists in realizing the great goodness of God. Beauty and goodness are the only two incentives to love. The attributes of God relating to goodness are described in the *Fātiha*. The *sura* runs thus :

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ مٰلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ

> All praise is due to God who is the Creator, the Nourisher, and the Supporter of all the universes. His mercy and goodness are unbounded ; He is the Lord of the day of Judgment.[6]

It is plain that the Divine goodness could not be perfect unless He first brought everything into existence from nothing and then gave it sustenance under

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[5] *Al-Ikhlas.*

[6] *Al-Fātiha*, Verses 2-4.

all circumstances and Himself supported it in its weakness All aspects of His mercies should come into play for His creatures and His goodness should have no limits set to it. To this perfect goodness, the Holy Quran has again and again drawn attention. Thus it says in one place :

وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا

> If you try to count the blessings and favours of God, you shall never be able to comprehend them.[7]

The Prayer

The fourth means for the desired end is prayer. The Holy Quran says :

ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

> Call upon Me and I shall answer your prayers.[8]

Repeated stress has been laid upon this point in the Holy Quran because man can reach God only with the assistance of God.

The Sacrifices

The fifth is *Mujāhida*, i.e., seeking God by spending one's substance and one's faculties and sacrificing one's life and applying one's wisdom in the way of God. The Holy Quran says :

وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ

> Exert yourselves to the full in the way of God whether with your substance or your lives or your persons with all their powers and faculties.[9]

Again :

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[7] *Ibrāhim,* Verse 35.
[8] *Al-Mumin,* Verse 61.
[9] *Tauba,* Verse 41.

وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ

Only they are successful who spend in the way of God of whatever We have given them of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, art, etc.[10]

And again:

اَلَّذِيْنَ جَاهَدُوْا فِيْنَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

And those who exert themselves in every way for Us, We will surely guide them along Our paths.[11]

Perseverance

The sixth means by which a person may safely attain to the goal is perseverance, i.e., he should be indefatigable and untiring in the way in which he walks and remain stead fast under the hardest trials. As Almighty God says:

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا تَتَنَزَّلُ
عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَلَّا تَخَافُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا وَاَبْشِرُوْا
بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ نَحْنُ اَوْلِيٰٓؤُكُمْ فِي
الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ

Those who say: "Our Lord is Allah, the true God," and renounce the false deities and then show perseverance, i.e., remain faithful and constant under trials and sufferings, angels descend upon them and say: "Fear ye not, neither be ye grieved but re-

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[10] *Al-Baqara*, Verse 4.
[11] *Al-Ankabūt*, Verse 70.

joice and be happy that you have become heirs to the bliss which had been promised to you; we are your guardians in this life and the next.[12]

In these verses we are informed that perseverance in faith brings about the pleasure of God. It is true that as the Arabic proverb goes: "perseverance is more than a miracle." The highest degree of perseverance is called forth when adversities encompass a man all around, when he is threatened with loss of life, property, and honour in the path of God and whatever is consoling or comforting forsakes him, so much so that God tries him even by closing the door of encouraging dreams, visions and revelations for a time. It is when a man is surrounded by these dreary sights and the last ray of hope departs that perseverance must be shown. Under such ills and sufferings a man must show firmness, not swerve from the line, hold on through fire and water, be willing to suffer every disgrace, wait for no succour or support, not even seek good tidings from Almighty God, and in spite of his helplessness and the absence of all comfort he must stand up firmly, submitting himself to the heavenly will without wringing his hands or beating his breast. This is the true perseverance which reveals the glorious face of God. It is this noble quality which the dust of the apostles, the righteous and the faithful still exhales. Referring to this, Almighty God directs the believers to pray to Him in the following words:

اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم

O God! guide us in the path of perseverance, in the path by walking in which we may draw Thy favours and blessings and Thy pleasure upon us.[13]

And again:

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[12]*Ha-Mim,* Verse 31.
[13]*Al-Fātiha,* Verses 6-7.

رَبَّنَآ أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَفَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ

O Lord! Bestow upon us in this affliction the contentment of mind which may give us patience and do ordain that we die in Islam, i.e., total resignation to the will of God.[14]

It should be remembered that in affliction and trials, Almighty God causes a light to descend upon the hearts of His faithful servants, strengthened with which they meet all trials with calmness and dignity and on account of the sweetness of their faith, kiss the chains they are bound with for walking in the path of God. When the righteous servants of God are under hard trials and sufferings and see death face to face, they do not supplicate their Lord to remove their sufferings. They know that to pray to God to remove the cup of their hard lot is opposing His will and not in accordance with total resignation to it. The true lover does not recede but takes a forward step when he sees ills and adversities, and looking upon his own life as a very insignificant thing, willingly submits himself to the will of heaven and is prepared to meet the worst. Of such people, Almighty God says:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِ
اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

The true lover of God sacrifices his own life in the way of God and receives the pleasure of God as its price: these are the people to whom God is particularly Merciful.[15]

In short, this is the essence of the constancy which leads to God.

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[14]*Al-A'rāf*, Verse 127.
[15]*Al-Baqara*, Verse 208.

The Company of the Righteous

The seventh means to attain the object is to keep company with the righteous and to imitate their perfect example. This emphasizes the need of the appearance of the prophets. Man is naturally inclined to imitate a model and feels the need of it. A perfect model infuses life into a man and invigorates him to act upon the principles of righteousness, while he who does not imitate a perfect model gradually loses all eagerness to do good and ultimately falls into error.

To this end, the Hol Quran says :

كُونُوا مَعَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ

Keep the company of the righteous.[16]

And again :

صِرَاطَ الَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

Walk in the paths of those whom God has blessed before you.[17]

Pure Visions and Revelations

The eighth means is pure dreams, visions, and revelations from God. As the road which leads to God is a secret and mysterious road and is full of difficulties and dangers, the spiritual wayfarer may depart from the right course or despair of attaining the goal. The grace of God, therefore, continues to encourage and strengthen him in his spiritual journey with inspiring visions and revelations, gives him consolation in hours of grief, and animates him with a still more zealous desire to pursue his journey eagerly. Such is the Divine Law with the wayfarers of His path that He continues to cheer their hearts every now and then

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[16]*Tauba,* Verse 119.

[17]*Fātiha,* Verse 7.

with His Word and to reveal to them that He is with them. Thus strengthened, they proceed upon this journey with great vigour.

Thus He says in the Holy Quran :

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ

> For them are good tidings in this world and in the next.[18]

The Holy Quran has described numerous other ways which assist us in reaching the goal of life but we cannot describe them here for want of space.

[18] *Yūnus*, Verse 65.

Question Four :

The Operation of the Practical Ordinances of Law in This and the After-Life

The fourth question, which I shall now briefly consider, is how does a true and perfect Law revealed by God practically operate upon the heart of man. This question has already been partly answered in dealing with the first question.

A perfect Divine Law enables a man to rise from the deepest depths of ignorance to the highest pinnacles of light and knowledge; it turns the savage into a man, the man into a highly moral being, and last of all, transforms his morality into spirituality and godliness

A Perfect Man

The injunctions of the Law have, moreover, the effect of regulating a man's relations with his fellow-beings and of strengthening the bonds of sympathy between them. By its aid he begins to see and know their rights and in his dealings with them applies his attributes of justice, goodness, and sympathy on the appropriate occasion. He freely gives to each, according to his desert, a share of his knowledge, substance, comforts, and other blessings which God has granted him. Like the sun, he sheds his lustre over all and like the moon, transmits to others the light which he borrows from the great and original source of light. He brightens like the day and shows the ways of truth and virtue and again, like the night, he draws the veil over the faults and misdeeds of others and affords rest to the tired and weary. Like the heavens, he takes every distressed one under his shelter and revives the lifeless earth with salubrious rain, and like the earth, he submits in all humility and lowliness to be trampled under the feet of others as a trial for them and furnishes them with various spiritual fruits. The effect of walking in obedience to the ordinances of a perfect law is, therefore, that a man is able to perform his duty towards God and his duty towards man in a fitting and creditable manner. He

is totally resigned to the will of God and completely engaged in the service of humanity. Such is the transformation which obedience to the law brings about in a man in this life.

In the next life, the spiritual union with God shall find a clearer manifestation in being afforded the sight of God and the services of God's creatures, which a man has performed simply out of His love and to which faith and the desire of good deeds are the only incentives, shall be symbolized into the trees and rivers of paradise. Almighty God says in the Holy Quran :

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحٰهَا وَالْقَمَرِ اِذَا تَلٰهَا وَالنَّهَارِ اِذَا
جَلّٰهَا وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا يَغْشٰهَا وَالسَّمَآءِ وَمَا بَنٰهَا
وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا طَحٰهَا وَنَفْسٍ وَّمَا سَوّٰهَا فَاَلْهَمَهَا
فُجُوْرَهَا وَتَقْوٰهَا قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ
دَسّٰهَا كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُوْدُ بِطَغْوٰهَا اِذِ انْۢبَعَثَ اَشْقٰهَا
فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ نَاقَةَ اللّٰهِ وَسُقْيٰهَا فَكَذَّبُوْهُ
فَعَقَرُوْهَا فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذَنْۢبِهِمْ
فَسَوّٰهَا وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبٰهَا

By the sun and its brightness ; by the moon when she walks after it, (i.e., borrows light from the sun and then transmits it like the sun) ; by the day when it shows the splendour of the sun and indicates the way ; by the night when it darkens everything and conceals it in the veil of its darkness ; by the heaven and the final cause of its spreading forth ; by the soul and its excellence which has made it balance all these things, (i.e., all the excellences which exist separately in each of these things are possessed concur-

> rently and completely by the soul of a perfect man, and as they are all separately engaged in the service of mankind, the perfect man alone performs all that service); saved is he from death who has purified his soul in this manner, (i.e., who in complete submission to the will of God is engaged in the service of man like the sun, moon, etc.).

The promise of being saved from death is an allusion to the eternal life which shall be granted to the perfect one hereafter. This shows that a virtuous course of life in obedience to the commandments of the Law leads to eternal life hereafter for which the sight of God shall serve as a sustenance.

The *Sura* then goes on to say:

> He is undone and must despair of his life who has corrupted his soul (and departs from this world having led an impure life and without having attained the excellences for which God had granted him his faculties. And adds by way of illustration:
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> The fate of that wretch shall be the same as that of *Samud* who hamstrung the camel which was called the "Camel of God" and did not allow her to drink from their fountain.[1]

The wretch who does not purify his soul really wounds the camel of God and deprives her of the water of his fountain. This alludes to the fact that the spirit of man is the camel of God, which he rides upon, i.e., the heart of man is the throne of the manifestation of God's glories and the water which is the source of the life of that camel is the love and knowledge of God. As to the consequences of *Samud's* rejection we are told that "when they wounded the camel and hindered her from drinking, they were destroyed and God did not even care for their young and their widows." Such is the fate of every person

[1] *Al-Shams*, Verses 1-16.

who hurts the camel of his spirit, does not care for its perfection, and withholds it from the water of life, viz., that he too shall be destroyed.

Divine Oaths in the Holy Quran

God's swearing by His creatures is a method adopted by the Holy Quran at which the opponents of Islam have often stumbled but their objections are due to lack of reflection. The oaths of the Holy Quran have underlying them mysteries of a very deep nature. The critics, being unable to comprehend them on account of lack of familiarity with such matters, have taken them for a flaw. In order to grasp this subject fully, we must consider the meaning and object of swearing. In ordinary transactions or legal proceedings, when a person takes an oath, his object is simply to supply the deficiency of insufficient testimony. He really calls God to witness when there is no other witness in the case; for God is the Knower of secrets and the best witness in every case. The manner in which he intends God to bear testimony is by His action, viz., that the truth of his assertion shall be confirmed if God does not send down His punishment upon him after the oath, as a mark of His displeasure which must follow a false oath.

It is for this reason too that a man is forbidden to swear by any creature, for no creature has the power either to know the secrets of men or to punish them for a false oath. The object and meaning of God's oaths must, however, be distinguished from those of the oaths of mortals. Divine laws reveal a two-fold nature of the works of God, viz., obvious and inferential. The former are easily comprehensible, and regarding them, few or no differences exist; but in the comprehension of the latter, there is room for error and much difference of opinion. In the form of oath, Almighty God has called attention to what may be inferred from what is obvious.

To take the oaths mentioned in the verses quoted above, we see that the sun and the moon, day and night, heaven and earth belong to the former class and their properties as referred to in those verses are universally known and acknowledged. But the same properties as found in the soul of man are not obvious. To lead to an inference of the existence of these properties in the soul of man Almighty God has called to witness His obvious works. he brief oaths may thus be unfolded into a chain of reasoning. The hidden excellences possessed by the soul of man are inferred from the manifest working of the sun and moon, etc. Man is a miniature universe and in his soul is represented on a small scale all that exists in the external universe. By creating man, God has, as it were, enclosed in a nutshell the various forces existing in the universe.

Now it is plain that the great bodies of the universe, for instance, have certain properties and forces which they employ in the service of God's creatures. It is, therefore, contrary to all reason to assert that man, who is above them all and greater than all of them, should not be capable of benefiting the rest of creation like them. Like the sun, he possesses a light, the light of wisdom and knowledge, with which he can enlighten the world. Like the moon, he borrows a light from the Most High, the original source of light, the light of vision, inspiration, and revelation, which he transmits to those who are yet in the dark and have not attained to the perfection of humanity. It is sheer ignorance then to assert that prophethood is a pretence and that a message from on high, Divine Law, and heavenly books, are mere impostures put forth for the purpose of achieving some private end.

Consider again how daylight renders manifest every path and reveals its ups and downs. The perfect man is the day of spiritual light. His appearance brings the different paths into view and points out the right from the wrong, for he is the bright day of truth

and virtue. Similarly we observe that the night affords rest to the tired and the weary. The overspent labourer welcomes the night and goes to rest relieved of the day's toil. Night, moreover, casts a veil over faults and thus saves a person from disgraceful exposure. The perfect man, in like manner, comes to give rest to the world and to lighten the burdens of men. With his revelations and inspirations from the Source of Wisdom and Knowledge, he pours balm into the souls of all understanding man. Great truths which wise men alone could not have discovered with the sweat of their brow are disclosed with ease through the Inspired One's agency. Revelation, moreover, assists reason and covers up its faults for it conceals its failings from the world. The wise man reforms himself and corrects his errors by the guidance and light of revelation and thus with its aid he saves himself from public exposure. This is the reason why a Greek philosopher, Plato, committed himself to the foolish act of making an offering to an idol, while no such error is recorded of any Muslim philosopher, because the latter had the perfect revelation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) for the guidance of reason. It will thus be appreciated why God has called attention to the covering of night in the form of an oath.

It is moreover clear that the perfect servants of God take every distressed and fatigued person under their shelter like heaven. The prophets of God especially benefit the world with the showers of their blessings and favours as heaven does with showers of rain. They likewise possess the properties of the earth, and from their purified souls various sorts of trees of knowledge and truth grow up in abundance, and with their shade, flowers, and fruits, they bless the world. Thus the laws which we read in the open book of nature are a witness to the hidden laws and their testimony has been described in the form of oaths in the verses quoted above. How excellent is

the wisdom displayed in the Word of God. And this is the Word which has been proclaimed through the mouth of an unlettered son of the desert. Had it not been the wise Word of God, the educated son of the worldly wise would not thus have been driven to their wits' end failing at last to realize the true sense with their imperfect reason have objected to these passages where treasures of wisdom lay concealed.

Thus we see that when worldly wisdom fails to discover the true meaning of words which are afterwards shown to be pregnant with meaning, this constitutes a strong testimony to the superhuman origin of the words. Such has been the case with regard to the oaths of the Holy Quran, which were considered as weak and vulnerable points, but now when the mystery has been solved and light has been thrown upon their true significance, all intelligent persons would derive pleasure from reflection on it.

The Holy Quran has resorted to the form of an oath in another place when describing the need and truth of revelation by appealing to the laws of nature. Thus it says:

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ
إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلٌ فَصْلٌ وَمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ

> I swear by the heaven which sends down rain, and by the earth which opens her bosom with rain to let forth vegetation, that this Quran is the Word of God and His revelation discriminating between truth and falsehood, and that it is not vain and frivolous (i.e., it is not uncalled for and unheeded but like timely rain has come in due season).[2]

Here Almighty God calls attention to His manifest law in the form of an oath as tesimony in support of the truth of the revelation of the Holy Quran. We

[2] *Al-Tāriq*, Verses 12-15.

see plainly in the laws of nature that rain comes down from heaven in time of need. The greenness and verdure of the earth depend upon heavenly rain. If it ceases for a time, the water in the upper strata of the earth gradually dries up. Thus we perceive that there is a connection between the heavenly and the earthly waters. Revelation stands in the same relation to human reason as heavenly water does to earthly water. As with the cessation of heavenly water, earthly water begins gradually to dry up, so also is the case with human reason, which without heavenly revelation, loses its purity and strength. When, therefore, a long period of time elapses without the appearance of any Inspired One of God, it is but natural that reason, like earthly water, should become noxious and impure.

As an illustration of this principle, we may cast a glance at the pre-Islamic period. Immediately before the appearance of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) darkness prevailed everywhere About six hundred years had passed since the appearance of Jesus Christ and during this long interval no great magnetizer and Inspired One of God had made his appearance. The whole world bore witness to a falling off from purity and virtue, and corrupt ideas prevailed widely. This was due to no other cause but the discontinuance of revelation over a long period of time. Reason and not revelation held sway and, on account of its imperfection and corruption, led people astray. The earthly water of human reason dried up because the heavenly water of revelation had not come down for such a long time.

This is the secret underlying the oaths of the Holy Quran. Almighty God directs the attention of men to His manifest law that the earth's bringing forth of vegetation and verdure depends upon heavenly rain. This manifest law points to the secret law relating to revelation. Reason alone cannot be trusted for it is liable to corruption and decay if revelation does not

afford it nourishment. When an Inspired One of God appears upon the earth his benevolence extends to all, and human reason is illumined and sharpened to a marked degree. There is observable a general searching out after truth and an animation and activity of all the dormant faculties becomes noticeable. Such flowering of reason and zeal of the intellect are the consequence of the blessed appearance of one who is a recipient of revelation When you see, therefore, that there is a general search after truth and that every one has begun to feel the need of faith, know it for certain that heavenly water has been poured down upon the earth and that Divine revelation has illumined some faithful heart.

Question Five:

Sources of Divine Knowledge

Having regard to the limited time allowed to me in this gathering and to the comprehensiveness with which the Holy Quran has treated this subject I shall deal with it as briefly as possible.

Three Degrees of Knowledge and Their Sources

The Holy Quran has described three degrees of knowledge as already explained in commenting upon the *Sura Takāsur*, viz., *Ilmul-Yaqeen*, *Ainul-Yaqeen*, and *Haqqul-Yaqeen*. Of these, *Ilmul-Yaqeen* is knowledge of a thing acquired inferentially as we conclude the existence of fire from the presence of smoke in a place without witnessing the fire itself. But if we see the fire itself, our knowledge of the existence of fire becomes a certainty of the second degree, viz., *Ainul-Yaqeen*. Knowledge of a thing we witness with the eye may, however, be further improved upon through actual experience; for instance, by thrusting our hand into the fire in the above case. Thus we reach the highest stage of certainty which, in the language of the Holy Quran, is *Haqqul-Yaqeen*. The *Sura* which describes these three stages of knowledge has already been quoted and commented upon.

Knowledge of Certainty through Reason, Information and Human Nature

The means which guide us to the knowledge of certainty are reason and information. With reference to those who discard these means, the Holy Quran says:

قَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ اَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِيْٓ اَصْحٰبِ السَّعِيْرِ

And they shall say: Had we but listened to the discourses of the wise or been ourselves wise and tested religion and belief by reason we should not have been among the dwellers of hell.[1]

The same idea is elsewhere expressed in the Holy Quran in the words:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

God does not burden a soul with that which is beyond its capacity.[2]

In this verse, Almighty God gives us clearly to understand that the doctrines and beliefs to which He invites people through His Messengers are only such as are within the capacity of human understanding and knowledge and that He does not force men to bear any burden which is beyond their strength. The verses quoted above also point to the fact that a person can acquire the knowledge of certainty through accurate information For instance, we have not seen London, nevertheless, we are certain of the existence of a town of that name because we cannot disbelieve all those who have seen it. Or, though we did not live in the time of Aurangzeb nor did we ever see him, nevertheless, it is beyond the shadow of a doubt that Aurangzeb was one of the Mogul emperors who reigned in India.

Thus we can arrive at a certain conclusion as to the reality of a fact or the existence of a thing through hearing when the chain of testimony is strong and unbroken. The inspiration of the prophets is a source of knowledge provided there has been no interruption in its transmission and the vehicle through which it is conveyed to us is not of an imperfect nature. But if there are fifty or seventy different accounts of a single event contradicting each other and they all pre-

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[1]*Al-Mulk,* Verse 11.
[2]*Al-Baqara,* Verse 286

tend to be based on revelation, the mere acceptance by one sect of some of these accounts as of a heavenly origin and the rejection of the rest as spurious and fabricated, if not based on the most critical inquiry lends no support to the truth of the facts therein related. A series of such narratives inconsistent with each other is utterly unacceptable and we need look for no other reason for the rejection. Nor can they be a source of knowledge, for they cannot lead to any certain conclusion, being themselves doubtful

In this connection, it should be remembered that the truth of the Holy Quran does not depend merely on its uninterrupted transmission and authenticity for it proceeds on the basis of reason. It does not invite us to accept its doctrines, principles, and commandments simply on the authority of revelation but appeals to our reason and furnishes arguments in support of what it inculcates. It is to this fact that the Holy Quran alludes when it says that the principles which it inculcates are impressed in the nature of man as we have in the verse:

هٰذَا ذِكْرٌ مُّبٰرَكٌ

> This blessed book does not preach strange and novel doctrines but it is a reminder of that which is impressed in the nature of man and the laws of nature.[3]

It also says:

لَآ اِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّيْنِ

> In this faith, i.e., the faith of Islam, there is no compulsion.[4]

It does not compel a person to accept its doctrines but offers reasons for their acceptance. Besides, the Holy Quran has the spiritual property of shedding light upon the heart as it says:

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[3] *Al-Anbiyā*, Verse 51.

[4] *Al-Baqara*, Verse 257.

شِفَآءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُوْرِ

The Holy Quran is a cure for all spiritual ailments.[5]

The Holy Quran is, therefore, not a book which derives all its force from being an ancient document which has been handed down to us through a safe course of transmission but its real force lies in the sound arguments which it produces and the clear light which it sheds.

In like manner, intellectual arguments which have a sound basis lead a man to a knowledge of certainty. To this the Holy Quran alludes in the following verses:

إِنَّ فِيْ خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ الَّيْلِ
وَالنَّهَارِ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِيْنَ يَذْكُرُوْنَ
اللّٰهَ قِيٰمًا وَّقُعُوْدًا وَّعَلٰى جُنُوْبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ فِيْ
خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هٰذَا
بَاطِلًا سُبْحٰنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

When men of wisdom and understanding reflect upon the creation of the earth and the heavenly bodies and look deeply into the causes which bring about variation of day and night, they find therein clear arguments of the existence of God. For a clearer understanding and knowledge, they seek the assistance of God and remember Him in all positions: standing, sitting, and reclining. This brightens their understanding, the more so that when they reflect on the consummate creation of the heavens and the earth, they arrive at the certain conclusion that the perfect order and all-wise plan discernible in all these glorious orbs is not in

[5] *Yūnus,* Verse 59.

vain but reveals the bright face of the Creator. Thus, being brought to a knowledge of the Creator, they sing hymns of praise to Him saying: "O our Lord! Glory be to Thee, and far be it from Thee that any one should deny Thy existence or impute to Thee unworthy attributes. Save us Thou from hell-fire for Thy denial is a hell and true happiness and felicity lies only in Thee and Thy knowledge. The person who has failed to recognize Thee is truly in hell in this very life.[6]

Conscience, which in the Holy Word of God, is called human nature, is also a source of knowledge. Almighty God refers in the Holy Quran to:

فِطْرَتَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِىْ فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا

The Divine impression on the nature of men with which all men have been created.[7]

This impression in the nature of man makes him regard Almighty God as One without any partner, the Creator of everything, and free from subjection to death and birth. Although the knowledge derived from human nature does not at first sight appear to be inferential, yet we have called human nature a source of knowledge because it leads to a conclusion by a very fine thread of inference. Almighty God has charged everything with a peculiar property which it is difficult to describe in definite words, but when we think of it and reflect upon it, the inherent property at once strikes the mind. If, for instance, we imagine the person of the Divine Being and ponder over the attributes we desire to see in Him and consider whether He should be subject to the processes of birth and death and suffering like ourselves, the idea makes us shudder. Human nature revolts at it and recoils from it, being unable to bear it. The

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[6] *Al-Imrān*, Verses 191-192.
[7] *Al-Rūm*, Verse 31.

idea is repellent. The still small voice within us at once cries out that the God in Whose powers we must completely trust must be a Perfect and Almighty Being free from every blemish and defect. The idea of God and of the Unity of God co-exist in human nature and the one is not separable from the other. It is for this reason that I have described conscience, or more properly human nature, as a source of knowledge.

Direct Knowledge through Perception and Revelation

But we can attain to a higher degree of certainty than that which has been described above through *Ainul-Yaqeen*. which means direct knowledge through perception. For instance, in the material world we obtain the knowledge of a perfume through the sense of smell, that of the taste of edibles through the tongue, and that of tangibility through the organs of touch.

All these experiences fall under the heading of *Ainul-Yaqeen*. But with respect to the life to come, our knowledge attains this degree when we are directly inspired by God, hear His sweet voice, and experience His glorious revelations. Undoubtedly we cannot attain to a perfect knowledge of God except through revelation. Moreover, we feel this desire, this thirst for revelation, in our hearts which is inexplicable save on the assumption that Almighty God has provided the means of its satisfaction. Can we, in the present life which is the only gauge of the next and a nursery of it, remain contented with a blind faith based on tales and legends regarding the existence of the true, perfect, all-powerful and living God, or be satisfied with the puny efforts of reason which has hitherto furnished the world with only imperfect and defective knowledge of the Divine Being ? Do not the lovers of God passionately desire that they should enjoy the bliss of speaking to their Beloved

One? Can they who have sacrificed everything for the sake of God and forsaken all their worldly interests, nay given their hearts and souls for their Divine Master, be content to stand in a dim light never to see the brilliant face of that shining sun of righteousness? Is it not true that the sweet words "I am" of the living God afford a surer knowledge of His existence than all the reasoning of the philosophers; so much that all their voluminous writings seeking to prove the existence of God by the insufficient light of reason are as nothing compared with these words?

In short, if Almighty God has designed to give a perfect knowledge of His Ownself to the seekers after truth He surely has not shut the doors through which they may be illumined by His word and revelation. In this connection, the Holy Quran teaches the following prayer to the seekers after truth:

اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيْمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

> O Lord, guide us in the path of perseverance, the path of those who have drawn Thy favours and blessings.[8]

The blessings here referred to signify the heavenly blessings which a man receives directly from God such as inspiration, revelation, etc. Almighty God says in another place in the Holy Quran:

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا تَتَنَزَّلُ
عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَلَّا تَخَافُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا وَاَبْشِرُوْا
بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ

> Those who believe in the true God and then remain steadfast and constant, the angels of God descend upon them and say,

Al-Fātiha Verse 6.

"Fear ye not, neither be ye grieved but rejoice that for you is the paradise which had been promised to you."[9]

This verse plainly indicates that the righteous servants of God are inspired by God in times of fear and grief and angels are sent down for their consolation. So, also, in another verse Almighty God says:

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ

Good tidings are granted to the lovers of God through His Word and Revelation in this life as well as in the next.[10]

What is Revelation?

Before proceeding further it is necessary to remove a misconception regarding *Ilhām* (revelation). *Ilhām* does not mean that an idea is infused into the mind of a person who sets himself to ponder over a thing. A poet is not inspired in the religious sense when brilliant ideas flash upon him as he sits down to make verses. In such a case there is no distinction between good and bad. When the mental powers are applied to a subject, new ideas do flash upon the mind according to the genius and capacity of the thinker without any regard to the good or bad nature of the subject. If the word *Ilhām* is taken to mean merely the upsurge of new ideas, a thief or dacoit or murderer may be called *Mulham* (the one revealed unto by God) by virtue of the ingenious plans which may spring up in his mischief-designing mind for the perpetration of evil deeds. Such a view of *Ilhām* (revelation) can be held only by those who are quite ignorant of the true God Who with His word gives peace and consolation to the hearts of the righteous and bestows knowledge of spiritual truths upon those who are not aware of them.

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[9] *Hā-Mim*, Verse 31.
[10] *Yūnus*, Verse 65

What is *Ilhām* (revelation) then? It is the living and powerful Word of God with which He speaks to or addresses one of His servants whom He has chosen or designs to choose from among all people. When these communications run on continually in a regular pattern not being disjointed or enveloped in the darkness of evil ideas, and are characterized by heavenly bliss, wisdom and power they are the Word of God with which He comforts His servants and reveals Himself to them. It is true that words are sometimes spoken to a man by way of trial but then they do not possess the qualities and power that characterize true revelation. In this early stage a person is tried and he either stumbles on account of the weakness of the flesh, or having tasted of the sweet and lifegiving fountain of revelation transforms himself and models himself upon those who have been the recipients of Divine revelation. If he does not walk in righteousness like the faithful servants of God, he is not deemed worthy of the favour and is left with nothing but vanity in his heart.

It should, moreover, be remembered that all those who receive revelation are not of equal degree in the sight of God. Even the prophets, the revelation received by whom stands on account of its clearness force, and excellence, far above the revelation received by the others, are not all upon the same level. As Almighty God says:

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ

Some prophets have been exalted over others.[11]

From this it appears that revelation is but the grace of God and does not determine a man's degree in the sight of God, for the latter depends upon the sincerity, devotion, and faithfulness of a person towards God. Divine revelation is, however, also a fruit

[11] *Al-Baqara*, Verse 254.

of these qualities. If an answer is vouchsafed when a man entreats his Divine Master, and there is a pattern of continuity and regularity in the answers and the word is accompanied with Divine majesty and light and reveals the deep secrets of the future and hidden truths, there is no doubt that it is Divine revelation. It is necessary that between the recipient of such revelation and the Divine Being there should be a very close connection such as exists in conversation between two intimate friends. When he addresses his prayers to Almighty God, an answer is vouchsafed to him in sweet and eloquent words proceeding from the Divine Being which is not the result of his own desires or of any deliberation or reflection on his part. Should he be continually graced with such words and answers, then surely the word which comes to him is the Word of God and he has honour in the Divine presence.

But this gift of pure and living words, revealed with clearness from God and not mixed with low desires, is not granted to any but those whose hearts are filled with a high degree of faith and sincerity and whose life exhibits a true pattern of virtue and righteousness. True and pure revelation unveils mighty wonders of God. Very often an effulgent light is created and with it comes a bright and majestic revelation. What greater blessing or happiness can be conceived than speaking to the Creator of the earth and heavens and being spoken to by Him? In this world the face of God is revealed by His Word and, therefore, the recipient of His Word enjoys the favour of His sight.

It must, however, be remembered that the mere utterance of words and phrases not clearly recognized as proceeding from God, does not invest them with the character of Divine revelation. A person who finds himself in this condition is really being tried by God. For Almighty God sometimes tries men who are remiss and negligent in the performance of their

duties towards Him by infusing certain words or phrases into their minds or causing them to be uttered from their lips with respect to which they are like blind men, not knowing whether the words proceed from God or Satan. A person who is thus tried by God should repent and turn to God and reform himself.

The righteous man to whom the doors of Divine revelation are thrown wide open and who is spoken to by God in words which possess light, sweetness, majesty, deep significance, and more than mortal wisdom, whose entreaties and supplications are answered by the Almighty as often as they are urged, who addresses his supplications to the Almighty repeatedly and receives answers thereto in a state of wakefulness, whose prayers are accepted several times a day, who is continuously enlightened of excellent truths, beneficent principles and deep secrets through the revelation which he receives, the person upon whom these favours are showered must be deeply grateful to God and devote himself wholly to His service for him has He chosen of His rich Grace and Mercy and him has He made an heir to all the blessings which He has granted to the righteous before. But this highest Divine favour is rarely granted and those to whom it is granted consider every other blessing as naught in comparison with this.

It is among the Muslims that individuals have always been raised to this spiritual eminence. Islam is in fact the only religion in which God draws His servant to Him and speaks to him and through him. He makes His habitation within his heart and draws him up to heaven. He bestows upon him all the blessings which He has ever bestowed upon the righteous before him. Ah ! the world is blind and does not know what a man may attain to if he approaches nearer to God. The people of the world do not care to take a single step to attain nearness of God ; but him

who is a pilgrim on this path they either declare an heretic or worship as God.

Both classes are guilty of an iniquity ; the one of excessive hatred and the other of excessive love. But the wise man should adopt the mean course, neither reject him whom God has chosen for this eminence nor bow down before him, whom God has created, as before the Creator Himself. The mantle of Divinity is cast upon the person who is thus favoured by God and he becomes a mirror for the image of the Divine Being. This is the meaning of the words of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him): "Whoever has seen me, has seen God." This is the final stage in the spiritual progress of a man, the goal where all his labours end and rest and satisfaction are granted to him.

I would be guilty of an injustice were I to conceal the fact that I have been raised to this spiritual eminence. Almighty God has favoured me with His certain Word and has chosen me that I may give sight to the blind, lead the seekers after truth to the object of their search, and give to the acceptors of truth the glad tidings of the pure fountain which is talked of by many but is discovered by few. I assure the listeners that, except by following the Holy Quran, no one can find the true God in Whom lies the salvation of man and eternal bliss. It is my heart's inmost desire that others shall see what I have seen and hear what I have heard ; that they shall forsake vain stories and run to accept truth. That perfect source of knowledge which brings one to the noble presence of God, that pure heavenly water which sweeps off all doubts, that bright mirror through which the face of God is revealed, is the Word of God, the Divine revelation to which I have called attention.

I say truly that if the soul desires it earnestly and the heart yearns after it, people should seek this way and set out in search of this path. But how can this way be opened and the veils of ignorance removed?

I assure all seekers after truth that it is Islam alone which promises this happy goal to the wayfarer and gives the glad tidings of this path of salvation. With all other people the way is closed to Divine revelation but to the followers of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) alone it is open. But rest assured that Almighty God has not barred entrance to this way ; such a view is simply an error sponsored by those who are themselves deprived of this heavenly blessing. Know it for certain, however, that as you cannot see without eyes and hear without ears and speak without tongue, in the same way you cannot see the face of the Beloved One without the aid of the Holy Quran. 'I was young and now I am old but I have never seen a man who has drunk to satisfaction of the pure fountain of knowledge except from this source.

Remember, no one can fight with God or frustrate His designs. Remember that the only means to perfect Divine knowledge is Divine revelation, a blessing granted to the prophets of God. But Almighty God Whose grace is bounteous has never willed that He would close the door to this Divine gift and thus destroy the world. The gates are still wide open through which a man can find entrance to the heavenly blessings of Divine revelation. But to seek it you must walk in the proper path and it is only then you will find it. That water of life came down from heaven and was collected in a grand reservoir. You must strive to reach that reservoir, stumbling and falling, and apply your lips to the cool and refreshing water of life. In this consists the felicity of man that he should run to the spot where any trace is to be found of the friend whom he seeks. As light comes from heaven and sheds its lustre upon earth, the true light of guidance also comes from heaven.

It is not through talk or conjecture that a man can attain to the source of true Divine knowledge. Are your eyes of any avail to you in total darkness?

If they are, then may your reason alone be a guide to a perfect knowledge of God. The true God is not one whose lips are sealed and who is, therefore, obliged to leave us to our own conjectures concerning Him. Nay, the perfect and living God has ever furnished unmistakable signs of His existence and He has even now willed to vouchsafe such signs to the present generation. The time is come when the doors of heaven shall be opened. Lo! the dawn is about to break forth. Blessed are they who rise up and seek the true God, the God whom no adversity can overtake and no revolution of time can affect and Whose lustre of glory never grows dim. He says in the Holy Quran:

اَللّٰهُ نُوْرُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ

> God is the light of the heaven and the light of the earth.[12]

It is from Him that all light proceeds. He is the Sun of the sun and the Life of all life, the True and Living God. Blessed is he who accepts Him.

Perfect Knowledge through Personal Sufferings

The third source of knowledge is that which is perfect in the highest degree and makes a man realize the certainty of Divine existence. This consists of the adversities and hardships which the prophets of God and the righteous are made to suffer at the hands of their enemies or otherwise in this life. Sufferings and trials make a man realize the full force of the legal injunctions which are thus illustrated in his practical life. Dogmas and doctrines are but theories. Their perfection can be tested only through practice. A person who undergoes great sufferings is afforded the opportunity to apply the treasures of knowledge which are accumulated in his heart to the actual cir-

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[12] *Al-Nūr*, Verse 36.

circumstances of life and by their right application he becomes, as it were, a perfect embodiment of Divine guidance.

The moral qualities, of whose knowledge the brain and the heart are the sole repositories at first, are demonstrated only through actual practice in all the external and internal faculties, and forgiveness, revenge, patience, mercy, etc., are no longer mere names to such a person but become realities which he has felt and seen and which thus leave a deep impress upon his external and internal nature. Almighty God says in the Holy Quran:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ
الْأَمْوَالِ وَ الْأَنفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ
الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُم مُّصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ
وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ
مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَ رَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

> With fear and hunger and loss of wealth and of lives and bringing to naught some of your efforts and causing loss of your children We will prove you (i.e., these mishaps will befall you either at the hands of your enemies or by a decree of heaven). But bear glad tidings to the patient who upon a mischance cry out: 'Verily we are God's and verily to Him shall we return'. Upon these are the blessings and mercy of God and these are they who are the truly guided.[13]

Here we are told that there is no great excellence in mere knowledge which is treasured in the heart or brain, but that the knowledge to be valued is that which, on account of its application to the practical

[13] *AlBaqara*, Verses 156-158.

conduct of life, moulds the pattern of a man's life. To strengthen and improve one's knowledge the best means therefore is its application in practice so that its impress is left not only upon the mind but upon every faculty and limb. In fact every sort of knowledge, whatever its comparative value, is mere speculation so long as it is untested by practice. It is to this that in the verses quoted above Almighty God calls our attention. We are told that our moral qualities cannot become firmly established unless they are proved by sufferings and trials which stand to them in the relation of practice to knowledge.

And again:

لَتُبْلَوُنَّ فِيٓ أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعُنَّ مِنَ
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتٰبَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ
أَشْرَكُوٓا أَذًى كَثِيرًا وَإِن تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا
فَإِنَّ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

> You shall assuredly be tried in your properties and your lives (i.e., you shall be robbed of your properties and put to death) and many hurtful things shall you hear from the Jews, the Christians, and the idolators, (i.e., you shall suffer at their hands); but if you are patient and eschew retaliation in kind, this shall be a great and noble stand.[14]

These verses show conclusively that knowledge is not perfect and fruitful without practical application. Knowledge which proves beneficent in practice is a source of blessings, but that which never passes into the domain of the practical has no value.

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[14] *Al-Imrān*, Verse 187.

Perfection in Practice –
The Holy Prophet's Life

The application of knowledge in practice is what leads a man to the stage of *Haqqul-Yaqeen*, for the certainty of a thing cannot be realized unless every side of it is put to a practical test. This is what happened in Islam. Whatever injunctions are contained in the Holy Quran were beautifully illustrated in practice in the life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) and in the lives of his companions who were thus enlightened with true light. For the fulfilment of this purpose Almighty God so ordained that the life of our Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) was divided into two distinct periods ; the period of sufferings, adversities and persecutions, and the period of triumph and prosperity. This was done in order to provide occasions for the display of both kinds of moral qualities, viz., those which can be demonstrated in time of suffering and those which cannot be put in practice except in triumph and prosperity. In this way the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) had all his moral qualities put to the test of practice and the two periods of his life enabled him to display all the noble moral qualities in the highest degree.

The thirteen years of his ministry at Mecca were a period of suffering. A study of his life during that period shows clearly that there is not a single moral quality which could be manifested in suffering by the righteous that was not displayed to perfection by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) His complete trust in God, his patient acceptance of every form of trial and adversity, his calm and serenity, his noble and dignified manner, his unbroken activity and zeal in the performance of his duties laid upon him, his perseverance, his fearless courage, and numerous other moral qualities so deeply impressed even the unbelievers that they bore testimony to the

great miracle of his perseverance under the hardest trials and sufferings and were ultimately convinced that all this was because of his perfect trust in God.

Then followed the life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) at Medina, a period of victory, triumph, and prosperity, suited for the display of another set of moral qualities. His forgiveness, charity, sympathy, humility, austerity, courage, and other high moral qualities were so well displayed during this period that large numbers of the unbelievers accepted Islam on seeing or experiencing them. He freely forgave those who had persecuted and tortured him and his companions over a long period, gave shelter to those who had expelled him from Mecca, enriched the poor among them and not only forgave his bitterest foes when their lives were completely at his mercy, but dealt most generously with them. In short, he demonstrated that he was indeed as God had described him in the Holy Quran, (a Mercy unto the Universes). The divine morals thus displayed by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) convinced the Arabs that their possessor could not but be from God and a truly righteous man. Their long standing and inveterate hatred was by these noble morals converted into fast friendship.

One of these great and noble moral qualities is thus described in the Holy Quran :

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلّٰهِ
رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

> Say to them : 'My prayers, and my sacrifice, and my life, and my death are solely for God' (i.e., for the manifestation of the Divine glory and for the welfare and benefit of mankind so that through his death, life might be granted to them).[15]

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[15] *Al-An'ām*, Verse 163.

It should not be supposed that death in the way of God and for the good of mankind here spoken of is an indication that the Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) was under any delusion like ignorant and madmen that a suicidal end of his own life would in any way benefit mankind. Nay, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) hated all such ideas and the Holy Quran condemns a person who entertains such ideas as guilty of a serious crime and says in plain words:

وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ

> Do not commit suicide and make not your own hands the instruments of your destruction.[16]

It is a plain and elementary truth that one man cannot relieve another of headache by breaking his own head. Such a proceeding is at the best an act of foolishness. In short, the reference to the prophet's death in the way of God and for the benefit of mankind simply denotes that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) had devoted his life to the service of humanity out of deep sympathy for the welfare of mankind, and with his prayers and exhortations and the adoption of every wise means for the regeneration of his people, as well as by bearing patiently their persecutions, he sacrificed his life and all his comfort in this path. With reference to this sacrifice of his life, the Holy Quran elsewhere says:

لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ أَلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

> Wilt thou wear thyself out with grief and hard work for these people who believe not.[17]

And again:

فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسَرَاتٍ

> And wilt thou spend thy soul in sighs for these people who do not accept the truth.[18]

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[16] *Al-Baqara*, Verse 196.
[17] *Al-Shuarā*, Verse 4.
[18] *Al-Fātir*, Verse 9.

The way in which a man may sacrifice his life for his people is, therefore, to meet all difficulties and work hard for their welfare by adopting measures which are calculated to promote their true prosperity.

It is mere folly to think that true sacrifices for a people who are deeply immersed in sin or involved in error consist in committing suicide. To regard this act of folly as conducive in any manner towards the salvation of those who have gone astray is the height of absurdity. It betrays, if not want of sense, at least a weakness of character and a lack of moral courage. It is a faint-hearted man who seeks shelter in death from the difficulties which he is unable to face. In whatever way may suicide be explained afterwards it cannot be doubted that it is an act of folly resulting from weakness of mind.

To be able to furnish a perfect example of high moral qualities, a man must pass through prosperity as well as adversity. If he is uniformly persecuted and subjected to sufferings and hardships and has no opportunity of judging and imposing his will on his enemies, he cannot be said to possess the quality of forgiveness of injuries. What he would have done, had he the power to avenge himself on his enemies, it is not possible to determine. To know, therefore, that a man possessed high moral qualities it is not enough to know that he showed meekness and forbearance when he was helpless in the face of his enemies and was being persecuted by them but also that he freely forgave those enemies when he was given power over them and when they were completely at his mercy. If he never went into the field of battle, the quality of his courage would be a moot point and we could not say whether he would have shown martial daring or cowardice. If he never experienced affluence, it would be difficult to say whether he would have amassed riches or spent his substance in charity. The grace of God granted the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) suitable opportunities for

the display of all kinds of moral qualities such as meekness, charity, courage, forgiveness, justice, etc., in so excellent a degree as is without a parallel in history.

It is true that forgiveness was not extended to the handful of implacable foes of Islam who were bent upon its extirpation and who had ruthlessly butchered in nocent Muslims or put them to excruciating tortures and cruel persecutions. Pardon to them would have meant the annihilation of the righteous.

The object of the wars undertaken by the Muslims at the bidding of the Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) was not to cause bloodshed. They had been expelled from their homes to seek shelter elsewhere and many innocent Muslim men and women had been murdered in cold blood. But their relentless persecutors had not stopped there. In obedience to the Divine Commandment of self-defence, the sword was allowed to be taken up against those who had drawn the sword for the utter extirpation of Islam. The object of these wars was, therefore, to remedy an evil by abating the bloodshed caused by the persecutors of the Muslims. Had the Muslims not defended themselves under these circumstances against the outrages of their persecutors, the result would have been the slaughter of hundreds of innocent lives including women and children and Islam would have been uprooted from the earth.

The error of the opponents of Islam lies in a misconception of the attributes of the Divine Being. They think that a Divinely revealed Law should on no account and under no circumstances whatever enjoin a resistance of evil or the punishment of evil-doers and that Divine love and mercy should not be manifested except in the form of meekness. With them the most reverential attitude towards the Divine Being consists in limiting His perfect attributes to humbleness and lowliness. This is a serious error. Anyone who chooses to reflect will see that the Divine laws of

nature, though they are a mercy for mankind, are not always manifested in a mild and gentle form. The Divine Physician out of His infinite mercy gives us sometimes sweet syrup to drink and out of His mercy too administers a bitter dose on other occasions. Both are manifestations of His mercy. Thus it is His mercy which requires that the wicked should be destroyed when He sees that they aim at the extirpation of the righteous and act corruptly in the earth and shed innocent blood. For this purpose He sends punishment upon the wicked either from earth or from heaven for He is Wise and He is Merciful.

All praise is due to God the Lord and Sustainer of the universes.

Appendix

Following is an English rendering of the manifesto published by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, author of this paper, before it was read at the Great Religions Conference, held in Lahore in December 1896.

"A Grand Message of Joy to All Seekers after Truth"

"In the great Convention of Religions which will be held in the Town Hall at Lahore, on the 26th, 27th and 28th December, 1896, my paper on the Miracles and Perfect Grace of the Holy Quran will be read. This paper derives from the Power which is not human. Indeed, it is one of the many signs of God, and has been written by His peculiar assistance. The thesis embodies certain truths and doctrines, inferred from the Holy Quran, which will make it clear that it is of Divine origin. Whoever cares to listen to the answers given in the paper to the five questions proposed will, I am sure, witness the birth of a new faith in the heart and the flash of a new light in his soul. In fact, he will find himself possessed of a commentary in epitome, of the Holy Word of God. These words of mine should not be taken as an extravagant statement or as an empty boast. The deep sympathy I feel for mankind has compelled me to write and publish this manifesto so that men may be enabled to perceive and admire the beauties of the Holy Quran. Let them see for themselves that our opponents have transgressed beyond the limits of reason in so far as they love darkness and hate light. The God of all knowledge has informed me through revelation that my paper shall surpass the other papers to be read in the Conference, and that it shall carry with it the light of truth and wisdom such as men of other denominations will be forced to acknowledge, provided, of course, they attend the Conference and listen to the paper from beginning

to the end. Nor shall it be within the competence of anyone to expound similar truths from his own scriptures, whether he be a Christian, an Arya Samajist, a Sanatan Hindu, or, for that matter, a follower of any other religion. For God has so willed that on the day when the Conference meets, the full glory of His Holy Book shall be made manifest.

In regard to this, I have been favoured with a vision in which I saw that a mysterious hand was laid on my palace, and with the touch of the hand there flashed a dazzling light which gradually spread on all sides, and I felt that light even on my hands. A man who stood by me forthwith uttered aloud the words :

Allāhu Akbar, Kharibat Khaibar

i.e., "Allah is Great : Khaibar is laid waste."

The vision may be interpreted thus :—The palace refers to my heart where heavenly light descends and accumulates ; the light that filled the edifice stands for the truths embodied in the Holy Quran ; and the Khaibar symbolizes all the corrupt doctrines which have gotten mixed up with fiction and immoral teachings, and have set up human beings in the place of God, or have brought down the attributes of the Divinity from the height of perfection. I have thus been informed that after my thesis has been widely circulated, the falsehood of counterfeit doctrines shall be exposed, and the truth of the Holy Quran shall daily continue to spread over the face of the earth until it encircles the globe. From this state of vision, I was next led to another spiritual state in which the following revelation came to me :

Innallāha maaka, innallāha yaqoomu aina ma qumta

i.e., "Verily Allah is with thee, and Allah stands wherever thou standest."

This is a figure of speech signifying Divine Assist-

ance. I refrain, however, from enlarging upon this. By this proclamation, I ask all men to attend the Convention at Lahore on the specified dates to listen to words of wisdom which so far as their reason and faith are concerned, will surely do them inconceivable good

Peace be unto him who follows the guidance.

Ghulam Ahmad.

Qadian
December 21, 1896.

THE AUTHOR

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born in 1835 in Qadian, India. From his very childhood he was deeply interested in the study of Islam and spent the greater part of his time in prayer and devotion. He was profoundly impressed by the condition of the Muslims and therefore devoted his life to defend the cause of Islam. He wrote nearly eighty books, mostly in Urdu but some in Persian and Arabic. Several of these have been rendered into English. His very first book, *Brahin-i-Ahmadiyya* was received with great acclaim by the eminent Muslims of his time and he was at once recognized as the most profound living thinker and scholar in Islam.

However, he met a storm of opposition when he claimed to be the recipient of Divine revelation and organized his followers into the Ahmadiyya Movement in 1889. Before his death in 1908 his mission had begun to be known outside India. The present Centre of the Movement is in Rabwah, Pakistan, and the activities of the Movement are led by his second successor, *Hazrat* Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, himself an author of several important books. By now The Ahmadiyya Movement has spread far and wide under the leadership of the present Head, and missions have been established in many countries of the world.

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